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Nick Carter Stories

THE MAN OUTSIDE
OR
NICK CARTER'S ARTIFICE

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THE MAN OUTSIDE;

Or, NICK CARTER'S ARTIFICE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEDUCTIVE ART.

The call came from the chief of detectives, seated alone in his private office at police headquarters, in New York. It was addressed to a sergeant in the outer office.

"I say! Grady."

"Yes, sir." Grady hastened to open the door between the two rooms. "What's wanted, chief?"

"I thought I heard Nick Carter's voice."

"So you did, chief."

"Is he out there?"

"Yes, chief, both he and his right-hand man, Chick Carter."

"Ask them to come in here. I want to see Nick for a few moments."

The sergeant nodded and vanished.

A moment later the imposing figure and the strong, clean-cut face of the celebrated detective appeared at the door. He entered, followed by his sturdy chief assistant, Chick Carter, nearly Nick's equal in the subtleties and strenuous requirements of the vocation in which both had acquired fame.

"Good morning, chief," Nick said cordially, when the other smiled and extended his hand to both, turning in his swivel chair to greet them.

"Glad to see you, Nick," said he. "Same to you, Chick."

"Same all around," Chick replied, laughing.

"That's right, too."

"What have you on your mind this morning?" Nick inquired.

"It's not on my mind, Nick, but on the table," replied the chief. "Have a look for yourself. I then want your opinion, not only of the articles, but of certain circumstances in connection with them. You have, you know, a happy faculty for making more minute observations than most men, and deducing more from them."

"It strikes me, chief, that you are spreading it on a little thick," smiled the detective. "Throwing violets isn't, ordinarily, in your line."

"It all goes, Nick," insisted the other. "See what you make of them."

Nick approached the table on which the articles referred to were lying.

They consisted of a soiled felt hat, with a soft crown and rolling sides; a dark, lightweight overcoat, also somewhat soiled; a russet-leather satchel of medium size, and a crumpled linen handkerchief. All were wet, as if recently saturated with water.

Nick Carter merely glanced at each of them. He knew with what purpose the chief had called his attention to them, that they related to a case that mystified him, and about which he wanted Nick's opinion. The latter had dropped into the headquarters on other business that morning.

"Well, chief, what about them?" he inquired, after a brief inspection.

"Sit down and I'll tell you," the chief replied. "Close the door, Chick, and draw up a chair. Those articles, Nick," he added, while both detectives complied, "were brought here half an hour ago by a deck hand employed on one of the Greenpoint ferryboats. He was sent by the pilot, with instructions to leave the articles here, and to state certain circumstances apparently relating to them. Mulligan is the deck hand's name."

"And his story?"

"May be briefly told," said the chief. "At ten o'clock last night two men were seen to board the boat at the Twenty-third Street ferry. They were seen by Mulligan and another deck hand named Brown. Neither can give

a definite description of either passenger, however, nor has either of them been identified."

"I follow you," said Nick, with a nod.

"There are several reasons for their inability to describe either passenger, to whom they paid no special attention. The night was unusually dark. The two men did not enter either cabin, moreover, but were seen talking earnestly on the after deck, outside of the men's cabin. Neither was seen to leave the boat at Greenpoint, though both Mulligan and Brown were in a position to have seen them disembark, if they had done so. On the contrary, Mulligan is positive, that he saw one of them go ashore when the boat arrived in the Twenty-third Street slip."

"On her return trip?"

"Yes."

"Continue," said Nick.

"One of the men carried a dark overcoat on his arm, presumably the one on the table. He also had a satchel resembling that one. At daylight this morning Mulligan discovered spots of blood on the deck where the two men last were seen in company, also on the rail near by."

"Denoting foul play, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Where were these articles found?"

"Caught among the piles of the Greenpoint slip," said the chief. "The boat was approaching the slip when Mulligan first saw the spots of blood mentioned. This led him to suspect something wrong and to look for further evidence. He naturally reasoned that one of the men had been assaulted and pitched overboard by the other."

"I see."

"That, Mulligan states, could easily have been done without detection. All of the other passengers, as well as the two deck hands, had gone forward, when the boat was approaching the slip. No ordinary cry would have been heard, nor would the assault have been seen in the darkness."

"The conditions evidently were favorable," Nick agreed. "Was Mulligan the one who discovered these articles?"

"Yes. He was looking for further evidence, as I have stated, and he saw them well up among the piles where the swash of water on the high tide of last night had cast them. He got them with a boathook, then reported the matter to the pilot, who told him to bring them to me, and tell his story. You now have it as I got it."

"It smacks of foul play, all right," Chick remarked.

"Was the satchel empty?" Nick inquired.

"Yes, open and empty, as you see it."

"The handkerchief, I infer, was in the overcoat pocket."

"Right."

"Is it marked, or plain?"

"Perfectly plain."

"How about the other articles? Are there no identification marks?"

"Only one," said the chief. "The overcoat is a ready-made one, having the business tag of a large retail store. The coat evidently has been worn for a year or more, and no clerk could be expected to remember the purchaser. The satchel cuts no ice, whatever. I've examined it very carefully. The only marks, in fact, are two initials printed with pen and ink on the sweat leather of the hat."

"What are they?"

"G. L."

"H'm! that ought to help," Nick remarked. "They probably are the initials of the owner's name. He printed them on the sweat leather in order that he might identify the hat when left temporarily among others. Obviously, then, he was in the habit of visiting hotels, restaurants, or clubs, where one's hat is quite frequently mistaken. Hand it to me, Chick. I'll examine it."

Nick drew a small but powerful magnifying glass from his pocket while speaking, then began a thorough inspection of the wet and soiled piece of headgear.

"You'll find red stains on the lining, evidently blood-stains, as if the wearer had been knocked on the head," said the chief. "There is a marred place in the felt, moreover, which may have been caused by the bludgeon used by the assailant."

"Yes, I see," said Nick, without looking up.

"There are stains of blood on the sleeve of the overcoat, also, where it must have fallen after the man was wounded. You'll find, too, that the ordinary trade-mark of the merchant of whom the hat was bought has been obliterated. It is so defaced, either by perspiration, or hair oil, that it cannot be read. The hat evidently has been worn for several months."

"Quite as long, chief, I should say."

"Aside from the two initials, in fact, there seems to be absolutely nothing to assist identification, or even supply us with any facts concerning the owner."

"On the contrary, chief, the title is quite suggestive," said Nick, a bit dryly.

"Really?"

"Yes, indeed."

"How so?"

"Whoever he may be," Nick proceeded to explain, "Mr. G. L. is probably a man in the forties. He is of medium size, with small features, and rather narrow face. His hair is sprinkled with gray. He is a man of some means, liberal at times, and at others inclined to be penurious. He is careful, nevertheless, about his personal appearance. He is afflicted with dry eczema. He is left-handed. He——"

"Hold on!" cried the chief, interrupting with a laugh. "Stop your buzz wagon. In another minute, Nick, you'll call the man by name, trace his pedigree, state his business, his companion's name, and what has befallen him. Don't badger me. Come down to cases. How do you know the facts mentioned?"

"They may be very easily deduced," Nick replied. "The size of the hat is six and three-quarters, too small for a man of large figure. That is confirmed, moreover, by the size of the overcoat."

"Well, yes, that's true," nodded the chief.

"All hats, particularly soft ones, gradually adjust themselves to the shape of the wearer's head," Nick continued, at the same time knocking the damp tile into shape. "This is unusually contracted in front, showing that the man's forehead is narrow. That indicates, of course, that he has a narrow face and small features."

"Humph!" grunted the chief. "I guess there's no getting around that, either."

"Between the lining and the sweat band are several hairs," Nick went on. "Two of them are gray, the others dark. Obviously, the man's hair is sprinkled with gray. That is most common, chief, among men in the forties."

"True again, Nick. I see the point."

"The hat, though worn since last season, was an expensive one. The felt, the lining, and the binding are of

superior quality. Plainly, chief, a man who buys such a hat, yet who wears a rather cheap ready-made overcoat, is sometimes liberal to himself and at other times inclined to be penurious. That's reasonable, isn't it?"

"Certainly," the chief again admitted. "But why did you say he is careful about his personal appearance?"

"Because the nap of the felt shows frequent use of a cornbroom. They are ruinous to a hat of this kind."

"And how do you know that the man is afflicted with dry eczema?"

"Because some of the tiny scales from his scalp still are sticking to the sweat leather. Would you like to see them with my lens?"

"No," said the chief, laughing. "Your word is good enough. How do you know that the man is left-handed?"

"The roll of the brim on the left side is much more pronounced than on the right, and the binding is also more worn and defaced," Nick pointed out. "Plainly, chief, he is in the habit of putting on and removing his hat with his left hand. No right-handed man ever does that."

The chief laughed again and nodded with genuine approval.

"You're all right, Carter," he declared roundly. "You're keener and deeper than any man I ever met. You can, perhaps, suggest some way by which we can identify the man."

"Yes, I think so," Nick replied. "If the hat was worn by its owner, I probably can establish his identity."

"When?"

"Within a very few minutes."

"The deuce you can! How?"

"I'll show you," smiled Nick. "May I use your phone?"

"Certainly. Help yourself."

Nick took the telephone from the chief's desk.

CHAPTER II.

A MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.

"Take the directory, Chick, and give me the names of the leading retail hatters," said Nick Carter. "Look up the telephone numbers for me, chief, as fast as Chick names them. A hat as expensive as this one must have been bought in a first-class store. It's odds that the man has an account there, and that his initials will enable us to discover his identity."

Nick Carter was right. He had called up only four of the most fashionable hat stores, when, after asking the necessary questions, he obtained the information he was seeking. The fourth store was a Fifth Avenue establishment near Forty-second Street, and the merchant stated that he had one customer whose name had the initials mentioned. He informed Nick over the wire:

"The man is Gordon Lang, of the firm of Lovell & Lang, importers of olive oil and a general line of Italian and Sicilian products. Their store is in Canal Street."

Nick thanked him and hung up the receiver.

"I am well acquainted with Lovell," he remarked, after stating what he had learned. "He's a fellow club member. I never have met Lang, however, though I know the firm by reputation. They do a large business. I'll ring them up and see what I can learn about Gordon Lang."

Before Chick could look up the required number, however, the telephone rang and the chief took up the instrument.

"Hello!" he called. "Nick Carter—yes, he's here. It's for you, Nick, from some one at your house."

The some one proved to be Patsy Garvan, one of the detective's younger assistants. Nick recognized his voice, upon taking the telephone, and he at once inquired:

"What's wanted, Patsy?"

"That you, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes."

"You're wanted down in Canal Street right away. Mr. Lovell, of the firm of Lovell & Lang, called you up by phone and has been talking with me. I told him I thought I could find you."

"What's the trouble? Did he say?"

"Yes. Their store safe has been robbed, a big batch of bonds stolen, and Mr. Lang is mysteriously missing. Captain Kane, of the Elizabeth Street police station, is there, and Lovell is suspected of knowing something about the crime."

"Did Lovell tell you that?"

"Yes. He said Kane had ordered him not to leave the store. Lovell fears he is going to be arrested. He admits that he's in bad, beastly bad, and begged me to send you to the store as quickly as possible. That's all the information I can give you."

"All right," said Nick. "I'll go down there."

"Well, well, the case seems to be shaping up quite definitely," said the chief, after Nick had told him what Patsy had stated. "Gordon Lang mysteriously missing, eh? The mystery will be cleared, I'm thinking, when his companion of last night is arrested. It may have been Lovell himself, since Captain Kane evidently has something on him. It strikes me, Nick, since you have progressed so rapidly up to this stage, that you had better take the case off my hands and see what you can make of it."

"That is precisely what I was about to suggest," Nick replied. "Tom Lovell is a personal friend of mine. If he's in wrong, as he admits, it's up to me to pull him out, if possible."

"Go ahead, then. I leave it to you."

"Will you phone Captain Kane to that effect?"

"Yes, immediately."

"Very good," said Nick, rising to go. "Hang on to these articles, chief, in the meantime. They may be needed later."

"Trust me for that, Nick. I'll hold them subject to your orders."

"Capital! Come on, Chick. We'll try to learn why the milk is in the coconut."

There was a curious expression on Nick Carter's strong, clean-cut face when he emerged into Center Street. A subtle gleam deep down in his keen gray eyes would have denoted to an astute observer that he had, perhaps, discovered something more than he had said to the chief, yet which he had omitted only because of the sudden turn of affairs.

It was nine o'clock when Nick and Chick headed for Canal Street and the store of Lovell & Lang, and the walk was not a long one. They covered the distance in less than a quarter of an hour.

The store occupied part of the ground floor of an old stone building, on the south side of the street. It was deep and narrow, with an office in the rear, containing the desks of the bookkeeper and several clerks, also a large steel safe of modern make.

The basement and floor above the store were rented

for storage, the firm doing quite an extensive business both wholesale and retail, having occupied the same quarters for something like twenty years.

Nick led the way into the store and toward the office, which was inclosed and at the open door of which Mr. Lovell was standing. He was the only son of the original senior member of the firm, who had been dead for several years, the son having inherited his father's interest in the business.

Tom Lovell was a tall, attractive man still under thirty and still a bachelor, though his engagement to Clara Wainright, a wealthy society girl, residing in Fifth Avenue, had been announced several months before.

Lovell's pale and anxious face lighted perceptibly when he saw Nick approaching. He hastened to meet him, extending his hand and saying warmly:

"I'm eternally grateful, Nick. I called up your office and one of your assistants said he would send you here."

"He did so, Tom. What's the trouble?"

"It's a bad mess, beastly bad. I give you my word, however, that I am entirely in the dark. I can tell you very briefly all that I know about——"

"A little later, Lovell," Nick interposed. "I'm very sorry to find you in trouble, and I'll do what I can for you."

"Ten thousand thanks, Nick. I know I can depend on you."

"I will presently talk with you," Nick added, glancing through the glass front of the office. "I see Captain Kane still is here. I want a few words with him, Lovell, to begin with."

"Certainly. Use my private office," said Lovell, pointing to an interior room.

Nick entered the office, where Captain Kane and a policeman then were questioning a young woman employed in the store, while the bookkeeper and two subordinate clerks stood listening.

"That, then, is all you can tell us, Miss Gargoni?" Kane was saying when the detective entered.

"Yes, all! Haven't I twice said so? Will my repeating it make it any stronger?"

"Well, well, it's not up to you to display any feeling," Kane growled. "We are only looking for the truth."

Nick glanced at the girl, struck less by the sullen resentment with which her low, sonorous voice was imbued, than by her remarkable beauty.

It was distinctly Italian, that darkly sensuous and magnetic beauty which both awes and thrills. She was a graceful, finely developed girl in the twenties, with an oval face, a velvety complexion, a broad brow, and glistening black hair. Her lips were superbly curved. Her eyes were like pools of liquid light, with long lashes and infinite expression. She was neatly clad and wore over her shoulders a gray silk shawl.

"When you are at liberty, Captain Kane, I'll talk with you," Nick said quietly, making his presence known.

"Oh, is it you, Mr. Carter?" Captain Kane turned quickly. "The chief phoned me you were coming. I didn't hear you enter. I am at your service, now, if you like."

"We will use the private office."

"Certainly."

"Come on, Chick."

Chick followed the others into the office and closed the door.

"I'm told it's a bad mess, Kane," Nick remarked, taking a chair and producing his cigar case. "Have a cigar while we are discussing it. Lovell is in trouble, I understand, and I'd like to pull him out, if possible. He's a friend of mine."

"You'll need an eighty-ton locomotive," said the police captain sententiously.

"As bad as that, is it?"

"As bad as can be, Nick, barring a catch red-handed. There's nothing to it but Lovell, absolutely nothing."

"H'm! is that so?" Nick murmured. "What can you tell me?"

Captain Kane dropped his burned match into a cuspidor, ejected a cloud of smoke, and sniffed its fragrance, then briefly studied the red and gold band on the Havana perfecto. Gazing then at Nick, he spread both hands on his knees and said grimly:

"I know about the satchel and garments you saw at headquarters. Mason, the policeman outside, met Mulligan when he was returning to the ferry. He was sent here to tell me about them, and I have heard enough to add two and two correctly. When the chief phoned and mentioned the articles, he said that you had identified their owner and had taken on the case. That made it unnecessary for me to inform him, which I was about to do."

"Well?" questioned Nick.

"It can be told in a nutshell," said Captain Kane. "At seven o'clock last evening, Lovell closed the safe out there, and was the last person to leave the store. He remained later than usual, he states, in order to write a few personal letters. The next person to enter the store, so far as known, was a poor but honest devil who has a key to the rear basement door and who comes here each morning at six o'clock to sweep and dust."

"What's his name?" Nick inquired.

"Marcus Durango."

"An Italian."

"Yes."

"Go on."

"Durango came this morning, as usual, and was still at work when Lovell put in an appearance. He arrived soon after seven, more than an hour earlier than customary, and opened the safe. The combination of it is known only by him and Gordon Lang, the other member of the firm."

"You mean, Kane, so far as is known," Nick corrected.

"Well, let it go at that."

"Proceed."

"Though he suspected nothing wrong, or so he asserts, Lovell found that all of the cash had been stolen during the night, amounting to something like two thousand dollars."

"Is he sure it was in the safe when he locked it last evening?"

"He says so."

"Anything else taken?"

"Yes. The safe contained two sealed packages of bonds, amounting to twenty thousand dollars. They were in one of the compartments. The packages were wrapped in oiled silk and carefully tied and sealed. They had been in the safe about a week, and were to be used for paying the duty on a large importation order, the invoices of which were expected daily. In place of the missing packages, however, there were two counterfeit sealed packages, containing only worthless papers, and evidently substituted to

avert suspicion until the accumulated cash could also be stolen."

"It would appear, then," said Nick; "that the genuine packages of bonds were stolen earlier than last night, possibly a day or two ago."

"That seems to be about the size of it."

"Was Durango here when Lovell opened the safe?"

"Yes."

"Have you questioned him?"

"Certainly. He says Lovell appeared amazed and horrified, and that he immediately notified the police. Mark one point, however," Captain Kane impressively added.

"What's that?"

"Lovell made no attempt to notify his partner of the robbery."

"And what do you deduce from that?" Nick merely inquired.

"I reason, of course, that Lovell knew that Lang could not be reached by phone, that he has gone to a place with which there is no telephone connection," said Kane grimly. "It's a very significant fact, Nick, that Lovell knew Lang to be missing this morning. He'll continue to be missing, moreover, until the East River gives up its dead."

"Tell me what you know about the matter," said Nick.

"I'll tell you what Mason has learned and done." Captain Kane rejoined, with a nod by way of emphasis. "It makes the case a copper-riveted cinch against your friend Lovell."

"I will, it it's all the same to you, Kane, judge for myself," Nick replied. "Go on with your story."

CHAPTER III.

THERESA GARGONI.

Captain Kane knocked the ashes from his cigar and proceeded to state what he had learned about the case.

"Knowing what Mulligan had discovered, Nick, and having been informed of this robbery, I set Mason to work along the most promising lines. He soon made some important discoveries. Briefly stated, Lang and Lovell were seen in company in Twenty-third Street about ten o'clock last night, and also on the Greenpoint ferryboat. They did not enter either cabin, but were talking earnestly outside. Lang wore a soft felt hat and carried a dark overcoat on his arm. Lovell carried a small russet-leather satchel. That, so far as is known, was the last seen of Mr. Lang."

"All of that is confirmed by the articles I have examined this morning," said Nick.

"No confirmation is necessary. Lovell admits it."

"Go on."

"Having established these facts, Mason made a secret visit to Lovell's lodgings. He has bachelor apartments in the Vandyke. The room clerk admitted Mason to the suite."

"Well?"

"Mason found in a wardrobe closet a plaid overcoat worn by Lovell last evening. On the under part of the right sleeve near the wrist are stains of blood, where drops naturally would have spurted if the right hand was raised and a blow dealt with a bludgeon. Mason brought the coat here and showed it to Lovell. He cannot account for the stains. He has no explanation to offer. I have ordered him not to leave the store. He is, in fact, under arrest."

"You have got in your work with dispatch, Captain Kane," Nick remarked, smiling a bit oddly. "Hasn't Lovell anything at all to say about the case?"

"He tells an incredible story. He says he had an appointment with Lang in the latter's rooms last evening, and that he went there about eight o'clock. Despite their business relations, however, they have not been good friends for more than a year. They seldom spoke to one another except about business matters. I have positive information of that."

"From whom?"

"From Theresa Gargoni, an Italian girl employed here for several years."

"The girl I saw you talking with?"

"Yes."

"What are her duties here?"

"She acts as an interpreter. Many of the retail customers are Italians, unable to speak English, and Miss Gargoni looks after them both when trading or settling their bills. She appears to be trustworthy, though she evidently has a nasty temper, if aroused. She lives with her parents in Bayard Street, just back of here, and Durango boards with them. He's the girl's uncle, but he's only about half there," Kane added, tapping his forehead. "He has bees in his tam-o'-shanter. He came from Boston three months ago."

"Those are unimportant details," said Nick. "Do you know of any cause for unfriendliness between Lovell and his partner?"

"Well, it's said that Lang wanted the girl Lovell is soon to marry."

"Miss Wainright?"

"Yes. She turned him down. No wonder; he's nearly fifty, she twenty-five. Since then the two men have not been good friends."

"Did Lovell give you that information?"

"Yes. He says Lang wanted to patch up their differences, and that he invited Lovell to his rooms last evening."

"What more has he told you?"

"He states that they had an amicable discussion until after nine o'clock, when Lang said he must go over to Greenpoint to spend the night with a sick aunt. He asked Lovell to walk with him as far as the ferry. Lovell says he consented and even crossed the ferry with him, returning on the same boat, and that the bag he was seen carrying belonged to Lang. The latter had explained that it contained a pair of slippers and a smoking jacket. A likely story! We have learned that Lang has no aunt in Greenpoint, nor anywhere else."

"From which you infer?"

"That Lovell's story is a lie out of whole cloth," Captain Kane forcibly insisted. "He cannot prove a word of it. He was not seen going to Lang's rooms, nor leaving in company with him. They were seen only on the ferryboat, and just before boarding her. It was midnight when Lovell returned home. He says he walked from the ferry. We can find no one who saw him, however, and his whole story is inconsistent and incredible. In view of the incriminating evidence and circumstances, no sane man would believe it."

"What is your theory of the crime?" Nick inquired.

"Simply this," said the police captain, placing one finger on Nick's knee by way of emphasis. "Lovell is soon to be married. He admits that the business has not been profit-

able for some time, and that he is somewhat pressed for money. I think he committed the robbery and then lured Lang to the ferry and got rid of him, thinking that he would be accused of bolting with the firm's money."

"Ah, I see," Nick remarked.

"Lovell transferred the contents of the bag to his pockets, then dropped it overboard, that he might not be seen with it later," Kane pointedly added. "He supposed, of course, that neither the body, the garments, nor the bag would be found."

"You think the bag contained the cash taken from the store?"

"Certainly. The bonds had been previously taken and dummy packages left in place of them."

"Possibly."

"That's the case, Nick, in a nutshell," Captain Kane proceeded to argue.

"There's nothing to it but Lovell. Otherwise, why didn't he telephone to Lang, as well as the police, when he discovered the robbery? Plainly, he knew that Lang was not to be found. How did he know it, then, if not responsible for his disappearance? What brought him here before eight o'clock this morning, moreover, an hour earlier than usual? Take it from me, Nick, he came only to make sure that he had left no evidence here tending to involve him in the crime. That's how I size up the case, Carter, and in my opinion it will stand as firm as Gibraltar."

Nick Carter did not reply for a few moments. He gazed thoughtfully at the floor, dropped his cigar into the cuspidor, then drew up in his chair and said:

"It does look, Captain Kane, as if you were shooting quite near the mark. Superficially regarded, the circumstances certainly seem to warrant the theory you have formed. I am, nevertheless, not quite ready to accept it. I wish to look a little deeper into the case. Where are the dummy packages that were found in the safe?"

"Here on the table." Captain Kane arose.

"I'll have a look at them," said Nick. "In the meantime, Chick, go out and have a talk with Lovell. Find out just what he has to say for himself. Understand?"

"Perfectly," said Chick.

He knew that Nick had no great faith in Captain Kane's theory, and that he wanted Lovell's statements without coloring given them by the police captain. He withdrew while speaking, and Nick turned and inquired:

"Is Mason still waiting outside, captain?"

"Yes."

"Send him to headquarters and have him bring the articles found by Mulligan," Nick directed. "I want Lovell to identify them. The chief will not object, if Mason states that I sent him."

"Certainly not. I'll attend to it at once," Captain Kane replied, striding out of the private office.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN OUTSIDE.

Nick Carter turned to the table mentioned. It stood near the office window. The latter overlooked a rear yard some ten feet below, from which there was an entrance into the basement under the store. The yard was half filled with empty boxes, barrels, and refuse, accumulated from the unpacking of merchandise imported by the firm.

Beyond was a disorderly array of sheds, yards, and a labyrinth of alleys lying back of a row of old buildings fronting on Bayard Street, and occupied by inferior shops and crowded tenements, the homes of the poorer class of Italians thronging that quarter of the city.

As he approached the window, Nick discovered a man in the yard, engaged in piling some of the empty boxes in one corner. The detective watched him for a moment, saying to himself:

"That must be the fellow Kane mentioned—Durango. Poor devil, indeed!"

One glance was enough to have convinced Nick of the man's identity. He appeared, as Captain Kane had said, to be only half there. He was a cross-eyed man of nearly sixty, whose dull, expressionless face denoted lack of intellect, as well as the abject subservience frequently associated with ignorance and conscious inability. He was as swarthy as a Spaniard, with black hair and a scraggy beard. He was much bowed, with rounded shoulders and a hump evidently caused by a curvature of the spine, which made his seedy garments hang as baggy on his deformed figure as those of a scarecrow in a cornfield.

"Poor devil, indeed!" Nick repeated, while viewing him.

Suddenly looking up, Durango saw the detective at the window. Nick's scrutiny appeared to disturb him. He turned away and resumed his work, then nearly completed, shuffling here and there with uncertain steps, and apparently with no further interest in his observer.

On the table were the dummy packages found in the safe, also the overcoat brought by the policeman from Lovell's suite in the Vandyke, each of which Nick was about to examine. Before he began his inspection of them, however, he heard light steps behind him and the voice of Theresa Gargoni.

"Want any help, sir?" she asked tersely.

"I think not." Nick turned and found her at his elbow. "I don't need any help, Miss Gargoni."

"You know me?" The girl's dark eyes lighted perceptibly.

"Captain Kane mentioned you."

"Ah, Captain Kane—I understand. I don't like him."

"No?"

"He is a pig."

"Why don't you like him?" Nick inquired, smiling.

"He is out to get Mr. Lovell for this crime. He didn't do it. I'll never believe it."

"Lovell is a friend of yours, I take it?"

"He is everybody's friend."

"Can you give me any information that might help him?"

"No, none; I know nothing about it," said Theresa. "But I am sorry for Mr. Lovell—and I hate Captain Kane." She added the last with a subdued, sibilant hiss, with her lips twitching and her heavy brows knitting darkly.

Nick smiled inwardly and felt sorry for Captain Kane. He could imagine that it would be unpleasant to seriously cross Theresa Gargoni. He detected under her fascinating exterior a spirit not wisely provoked.

"Captain Kane may be mistaken," he replied.

"May be—he must be," said Theresa.

"Can you tell me anything about Mr. Lang?" Nick inquired.

"About him—what do you mean?"

"You have seen him daily, haven't you?"

"Yes, of course."

"Have you noticed anything unusual of late, any indications of nervousness, despondency, or——"

"You are thinking of suicide," Theresa interrupted. Then

she shrugged her shoulders and shook her head, replying: "No, nothing like that. He was silent and morose, but—— No, nothing like that. He didn't have the nerve. He might have killed somebody else—but not himself."

Durango had finished his work in the yard. He had shuffled out through the gate in the high board fence, and was picking his way through an alley and around some sheds and toward one of the tenement houses.

"Who is that fellow?" Nick inquired, again observing him.

Theresa Gargoni gazed after the twisted, seedily clad figure, and then her sombrous black eyes met those of the detective with a sharper scrutiny.

"That"—she spoke with a subtle sneer of contempt—"that's my uncle, my mother's half brother. He's only half a man, too, poor pig. He lives with us—over there," she added, pointing.

"What's his name?"

"Durango."

"Employed here?"

"Yes, but only for odd jobs, enough to earn his bread," said Theresa. "He's no good, but must do something, or starve. Mr. Lang wouldn't keep him, but I told Mr. Lovell about him, and—he's always good. He kept him at work here."

"He was here this morning, I believe, when Lovell opened the safe," Nick remarked.

"Yes. How did you know? Who told you?"

"Captain Kane informed me."

"Kane—bah! Always Captain Kane—I hate him! If he fixes this crime upon Mr. Lovell, I will—I will kill him."

"Oh, no, you won't," Nick said, a bit sharply. "You'll do nothing of the kind. Take a tip from me, too, and don't make such threats. You'll get in wrong yourself unless you are more careful."

"Myself—bah! I don't care for myself. I care only for Mr. Lovell. He is in trouble."

"Well, well, it may be only temporary," said Nick. "I shall try to set him right."

He turned away from the girl. Her dark face had lost most of its color and much of its beauty. It looked drawn, hard set, and cruel, and Nick wondered whether Lovell had had any secret relations with Theresa Gargoni that occasioned this display of feeling. She turned and left the private office when he abruptly ended their conversation.

Nick then examined the articles on the table, the stains on the sleeve of Lovell's coat, and the dummy packages found in the safe.

Both packages had been opened. The worthless papers, the oiled silk wrappers, the strips of tape with which they had been bound, all were lying on the table. Still cleaving to the wrappers were portions of the red wax seals with which they had been secured.

Nick examined them with his magnifying glass, with brows knitted slightly, while a sharper gleam appeared in his earnest eyes. He had made a discovery of some importance—so important that he carefully folded the pieces of oiled silk, the tape, and what was left of the seals, and wrapped them in a newspaper, which he tied with one of the strips of tape. He had only just finished making the small parcel when Chick entered the office, followed by the suspected man.

"Well, Nick, what do you make of it?" Lovell asked impulsively, gazing anxiously at the detective.

Nick shook his head.

"Don't ask me, Tom, at present," he replied. "I'm not ready to say."

"You don't believe me guilty of these crimes?"

"Frankly, Tom, I don't."

"Thank you for that, Nick, anyway."

"But I have not looked deep enough into the case to have formed any other opinion," Nick added. "I understand that you and Lang have not been very good friends, despite your business relations?"

"That is true."

"For the reasons Captain Kane has mentioned?"

"Yes, I presume so. I told him the reasons."

"Did Miss Wainright ever give Lang occasion to believe she favored his suit?"

"No, never!" Lovell forcibly declared.

"Kane told me, also, that you are short of money. How about it?"

"That is not so, Nick. I have ample means not involved in this business. It is true that our business has not been profitable for more than a year. We have about forty thousand dollars in it, each with an equal interest, and it has always been understood that I should not be further involved. I have other money, however, and plenty of it."

"Approximately, then, the amount stolen would be about half of the firm's capital?"

"Yes, just about that."

"Is there any person whom you suspect of the robbery?"

"No, certainly not."

"Or whom you can reasonably suspect?"

"No. I am entirely in the dark."

"Only you and Lang, so far as you know, have the safe combination?"

"I know of no other."

"The safe must have been opened, nevertheless, by some person familiar with it," said Nick, while leading the way into the outer office. "You locked it last night. Are you sure you scattered the combination?"

"Yes, absolutely sure."

"I shall wait here until Mason returns. Slip this parcel into your pocket, Chick. We'll open it when we reach home."

"I'll look after it."

"Whoever did this job, assuming it to have been the work of an outsider, probably entered through the rear door and basement. I wish to see whether there is any evidence of it. Where are the stairs leading to the basement?"

"This way," said Lovell.

Nick followed him into the store and to a door in one corner.

"I'll go down with you," Lovell volunteered.

"I prefer to go alone," Nick replied. "Remain here, Chick, until I return."

He did not wait for an answer. He picked his way down the dimly lighted stairs, between numerous barrels and boxes, and presently arrived at the basement door, which he found to be locked.

Nick opened it with a skeleton key, then stepped into the rear yard. He glanced up at the windows, at neither of which he could discover any observer, and then he stole away—in the direction taken by Marcus Durango.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN ASLEEP.

Nick Carter easily traced Durango. Footprints in the alley and between two sheds, thence back of a small stable in which a fruit vender's wagon was standing, showed the course taken by the Italian. Nick presently brought up back of a tenement house, in the lower kitchen of which a corpulent, middle-aged woman in a bright-red blouse, though scarce more red than her heated face and robust arms, was washing dishes.

"Madame Gargoni," thought Nick, noting her maternal resemblance to Theresa.

The woman, intent upon her work, had not observed him. The back door of the tenement was open. Nick stepped quietly into a narrow entry, then paused to listen.

From one of the front rooms came the snore of a man sleeping soundly. There could be no mistaking it for the snore of a woman. It was like a blast from a baritone horn.

Nick stepped to the kitchen door. A loose board in the floor creaked noisily.

Madame Gargoni turned around quickly and saw him. Her countenance changed like a flash. She appeared startled and suspicious. She wiped the suds from her arms, and sharply questioned:

"What do you want? Where did you come from?"

"Finding your door open, I took the liberty of entering," Nick replied.

"What do you want?" Madame Gargoni repeated, frowning.

"I am looking for a man named Durango."

"Durango?"

"Yes."

"Half a man, you mean. What do you want of him?" Madame Gargoni demanded suspiciously.

"I will inform him when I see him," said Nick, a bit curtly. "He lives here, doesn't he?"

"Yes."

"Call him, then, and I will talk with him."

Madame Gargoni hesitated.

The loud snoring had suddenly ceased. The silence that had followed convinced Nick that the man who had awakened was listening.

"Is there any objection to my seeing Durango?" he inquired.

"No. Why should there be?"

"But you hesitate and——"

"Because Durango isn't here."

The interruption came from a man in the entry, into which he had strode from an adjoining room. He was big and powerful, of almost gigantic frame, a swarthy man of middle age, wearing a blue woolen shirt, that was partly unbuttoned, exposing a huge neck and shaggy breast. He approached while speaking, glaring distrustfully at the detective, and adding:

"That's why she hesitates. Durango isn't here."

"He came here a short time ago, didn't he?" Nick inquired, sharply eying the man.

"Yes. But he went out again."

"When?"

"Three or four minutes ago."

"Ah, I see!" Nick nodded. "Did you notice which way he went?"

"Out the front door. That's all I can tell you."

"I have just missed him, then. You are Mr. Gargoni, I take it?"

"Yes," Gargoni admitted, with a growl. "But you've got something on me. I don't know you."

"I have been talking with your daughter," Nick explained. "I'm a detective, and am investigating the robbery where she is employed."

"*Sapristi!* That's different," said Gargoni, while the scowl quickly vanished from his dark face. "Why didn't you say so? But Durango isn't here. He went out. You don't suspect him, eh? He don't know enough to rob a blind beggar."

"No, I do not suspect Durango," said Nick.

"Why do you want him, then?"

"I thought he might be able to tell me something about the case."

Gargoni laughed derisively, and shook his huge head.

"No, he knows nothing," he declared. "I have asked him about it. He don't know enough to go in when it rains. My girl, Theresa, might tell you, but not Durango. He's a pig."

"I'll not wait to see him, then," said Nick, with a glance from one to the other. "I'm sorry I troubled you."

"No trouble, sir," said Gargoni, while he followed Nick to the door. "Are you going back there?"

"Yes."

"I'll send Durango over when he comes in, if you say so."

"There would be nothing gained, Mr. Gargoni, if he knows no more than you have stated," Nick replied, smiling. "No, I'll not trouble you. Besides, I shall have left the store in a very short time."

"All right, sir. Good day, sir."

Gargoni had become noticeably polite, quite in contrast with his earlier bearing. He bowed and waved his brawny arm while the detective drew away, then stood watching him until he disappeared back of the stable mentioned. When he returned to the kitchen, however, Gargoni's black eyes had taken on a gleam that told another story.

Not more than ten minutes had passed when Nick, returning through the basement, rejoined Chick and Lovell in the store. The policeman also had returned, bringing the articles after which he had been sent, and they then were lying on one of the counters. Tom Lovell, more pale and anxious than ever, was gazing at them when the detective approached.

"I suppose you recognize them?" said Nick.

"Yes," Lovell admitted. "It's the hat Lang was wearing. He carried the coat over his arm."

"Were you carrying the satchel?"

"Yes."

"How did that happen, if it belonged to Lang?"

"He was smoking a cigar, which he frequently took from his mouth in order to talk with me," Lovell explained. "It being awkward for him to carry both his coat and bag, I offered to carry the latter."

"H'm, I see!" Nick thoughtfully nodded. "I guess that's all, Lovell, at present. Where can I find you later in the day, if I want you?"

Lovell's white face flushed deeply. The significance of the detective's question could not be mistaken. The young man drew himself up a bit proudly and quickly answered:

"You'll find me here, Nick, or in my suite at the Vandyke. Don't think for a moment that I have any inclina-

tion to run away from charges that may be made against me."

"That's good enough for me," Nick replied. "I'll take these articles to my office, Lovell, and will see you later."

"But——"

"That's all I can say at present," Nick interrupted. "I must look deeper into the case before I can express any opinion. I will take charge of it, Captain Kane, and relieve you from further investigation."

The last was quietly addressed to the latter, as Nick turned away and signed for Chick to take charge of the several articles. Captain Kane, however, did not appear quite satisfied. He frowned slightly, and whispered:

"Aren't you taking too long a chance, Nick?"

"What kind of a chance?"

"That Lovell may bolt. If this is a case of murder, as appears obvious, he may——"

"Nonsense!" Nick cut in quietly. "If he had any intention of bolting, he would have been miles away by this time. Besides, I know the man," he added significantly.

"All right. It's your funeral."

"I'll take the responsibility."

Captain Kane beckoned to Mason, and both hurried from the store.

It was eleven o'clock when Nick departed, in company with Chick, and nearly noon when they entered the detective's residence in Madison Avenue.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE SURFACE.

"Gee! it looks black enough to me, chief," Patsy Garvan declared. "Black dock mud isn't a marker to it. On the dead, chief, I'm like Cap Kane—all I can see is Lovell. If he didn't get away with that coin and afterward switch out Lang's lights, who the dickens did? Somebody must have done both jobs. It looks to me like Lovell, all right."

"Providing, Patsy, that the evidence and circumstances have been sized up correctly," Nick pointedly replied, smiling across the table at the flushed face of his younger assistant.

It then was three o'clock. Nick had lunched. He had reviewed the case alone in the quietude of his study, and had taken a few other steps in connection with it. He then was seated in his business office with Chick and Patsy, prepared to state his views and to determine the work devolving upon them.

On the table at which they were seated were the numerous articles brought home that morning, each of which Patsy had carefully examined. Chick had told him about the case in the meantime, and how each was supposed to figure in it.

Patsy's scrutiny of them, together with what he was told, had brought an expression of dubious misgivings to his ruddy face, and also evoked the foregoing observations.

"Sized it up correctly!" he exclaimed, taking up Nick's remark. "How can one be mistaken?"

"Mistakes are easily made, Patsy."

"But Lovell admits that he was with Lang on the ferryboat. He returned to New York alone. Lang surely could not have gone ashore at Greenpoint, or one of the deck hands would have seen him. Besides, chief, all of this evidence points to Lovell. None of it even suggests any one else. It shows almost conclusively that Lovell is the only man who could have committed the murder."

"It shows something else, Patsy, even more conclusively."

"What's that, chief?"

"That you need a pair of strong spectacles," smiled Nick.

"I do, eh! What do you mean?"

"I mean that you see only indistinctly, or else you don't appreciate what you do see."

"Gee! I'm not alone, then," said Patsy, with a quick glance at Chick. "Come to the point, chief. What's the wrinkle?"

"Something I noticed when talking with the chief at headquarters this morning," said Nick, more gravely. "Take another look at Lang's hat, Patsy. You know by what deductions I discovered the owner of it. See what more you can find."

Patsy complied, and again examined the defaced felt hat. He studied it inside and out, crown and brim, lining and sweat leather, and all the while with a look of increasing perplexity.

"By gracious, chief, you've got my goat, all right," he finally declared, shaking his head. "If you can dig more out of this old tile than you stated this morning—well, my hand goes to the discard and you rake the pot."

"Let me examine it again, Patsy," said Chick, wondering what Nick had up his sleeve.

"There you are, Mr. Lynx-eyes," laughed Patsy, tossing the hat. "Flash your lamps on it. You'll find the key to the whole mystery—mebbe!"

Chick did not reply to these jests. He studied the hat in silence for several moments. Presently, looking up, he said abruptly:

"Spring it, Nick. I'm blessed if I get next."

"Ah!" Patsy murmured loudly.

Nick smiled, and shook his head disapprovingly.

"Both of you should detect it," said he. "So important a point should not escape eyes as carefully trained as yours. A man's life might depend upon it. It caused me to immediately take on this case. You see, of course, the two initials on the sweat leather."

"Certainly," Chick nodded. "They are plain enough."

"Remarkably plain," said Nick dryly. "That's the very point. Printed with pen and ink, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"They are not faint and illegible, take notice; not partly effaced by perspiration or hair oil, which have soiled and stained the entire sweat leather."

"No, not at all, Nick."

"Obviously, then, they must have been very recently printed."

"Yes, surely," Chick agreed. "That's as plain as twice two."

"But the hat is an old one," said Nick. "Men mark their hats, or have them marked, when they are new, not after having worn them till they are not worth the trouble of marking. Those initials were printed within a week; I think I might safely say within a day or two. Do you imagine for a moment that Gordon Lang marked that old hat in order to avoid losing it, or mistaking another one for it?"

"Oh, by Jove! I see the point," Chick cried. "You think it was marked with some other object in view"

"Certainly."

"That the initials, if the hat was found, might help to identify the owner?"

"Exactly. What other motive would be consistent with Lang's immediate disappearance, taken in consideration with all of the surrounding circumstances?"

"None," Chick quickly admitted. "You are right."

"But in that case, chief," Patsy hastened to argue, "Lang must have foreseen that he might be a victim of foul play. He must have known that some one was out to turn him down."

"No, not necessarily."

"Gee! I don't see how you figure that out. If the initials have the significance you suspect, and if Lang marked them in the hat——"

"Ah, there's the point, Patsy," Nick interrupted. "I don't know that Lang did the marking. If we assume that he did, and attribute to the initials the significance mentioned, we must also assume that he was a party to his own murder, or to a plot resulting in it."

"That's right, chief. I see the point."

"And that seems hardly possible," Nick added. "It is much more probable that the hat was stealthily marked by somebody else, by one of the gang plotting to kill him."

"You think it was the work of a gang?" questioned Chick.

"I now am quite convinced of it," Nick replied. "That is why, much to Captain Kane's disapproval, I did not arrest Lovell, or take any steps to interfere with his liberty. I have not suspected Lovell from the first. I was obliged to pretend, however, that I had no definite suspicions and that I was deeply mystified."

"Why so, Nick?"

"In order to blind a certain party who, I observed, was intently watching me and listening to all I said."

"Theresa Gargoni?"

"The same."

"Do you suspect her?"

"I do, Chick, very seriously."

"For any specific reason?"

"Yes," said Nick. "Thinking that I would question Durango about Lovell's appearance and remarks, when he discovered the robbery this morning, I followed him to the tenement occupied by the Gargoni family, instead of making an investigation in the basement, as I was supposed to be doing. Madame Gargoni was at work in the kitchen and did not see me. The back door was open, and I stepped into the entry. Gargoni was sound asleep in an adjoining room. He was snoring to beat the band."

"He was having a morning siesta," Patsy put in, with a grin.

"It may prove to have been an expensive one for him," Nick replied, a bit grimly.

"Why?" Chick inquired. "What occurred?"

"I questioned the woman, asking for Durango. She hesitated, and appeared suspicious. My voice disturbed Gargoni. His snoring suddenly ceased. He awoke, and I knew that he was listening. He had some secret motive, some reason for playing the eavesdropper. Presently he strode into the entry, confronting me, and stated that Durango went out the front door two or three minutes before. I asked him which way he turned, that I might be sure Gargoni meant for me to think he had seen him."

"Well?" questioned Chick, when Nick paused for a moment.

"Gargoni lied."

"How do you know?"

"Because he had been sleeping soundly much longer than two or three minutes. He could not have seen Durango."

"He may have dropped asleep after Durango went out?"

"Impossible!" Nick insisted. "I had seen Durango go to the tenement less than ten minutes before. Gargoni must have been asleep that long. Such profound slumber takes possession of one only after several minutes, at least, for he was snoring like a trooper."

"It may have been feigned?"

"Not so. There was no occasion. My visit was not anticipated. He was snoring before my presence was suspected, even, and I know a genuine snore when I hear it. Gargoni lied—that's as sure as death and taxes."

"I guess you're right, Nick," Chick admitted.

"Gee! it's a cinch," put in Patsy. "And that lie, chief, shows that he must be in some way involved in this crime. Otherwise he would have had no motive for lying."

"Precisely," said Nick. "I saw that point immediately. I then pretended, of course, that I did not suspect anything, and that I had called only to learn what Durango could tell me. As if it was not material, however, I left almost immediately and returned to the store."

"So that Gargoni wouldn't fear that you suspected anything?"

"Exactly."

"By Jove! the case begins to look different," said Chick. "It doesn't look at all like Lovell now."

"Lovell—I should say not!" cried Patsy. "I can't even see him now, though before the chief cut loose I could see no one else."

"That shows the value of little things and the importance of making minute observations," said Nick. "Now, let's see where we stand."

"That's the stuff, chief."

"Gargoni lied. His aim was to prevent me from questioning Durango. His wife's attitude denoted that she, too, was inclined to be secretive. We can safely assume, then, that all three are in the same boat, as well as their daughter. In other words, I believe that they committed these crimes, including a conspiracy to fix them upon Tom Lovell."

"But Theresa Gargoni's attitude this morning——"

"That was only a blind, designed to throw me off the true scent."

"How can they have learned the safe combination?"

"Theresa Gargoni may have discovered it."

"Possibly."

"Take it from me, Chick, she's a crafty jade, and a bad egg."

"It's long odds, then, that she is the one who marked Lang's hat."

"Quite likely. She could have done so when he was not wearing it in the store."

"But how could they have worked Lovell so cleverly?" asked Patsy. "He boarded the ferryboat voluntarily with Lang, who also must have been fooled in some way. How could Lang have been killed on the boat after parting from Lovell, and how could——"

"Hold your horses, Patsy," Nick interrupted. "You are going too fast. Lang may have landed in Greenpoint, for all he was not seen. He may have been killed after going ashore, and the evidence afterward planted."

"But the blood on Lovell's coat?"

"That may have been put there during the day, while

the coat was hanging in the store. It is under the sleeve, and would not ordinarily be noticed."

"Theresa Gargoni again," suggested Chick.

"No doubt."

"We know, too, that Durango has a key to the basement door. It's odds that the robbery was committed during the night, after Lang had been turned down."

"By Jove, it strikes me, chief, that we'd better get after this Gargoni gang," Patsy said abruptly.

"That is precisely what I intend doing," Nick replied. "The fact must not be overlooked, however, that our suspicions are not based upon tangible evidence, necessary to convince a judge and jury. That must be secured.

"The body of Lang must be found, or enough evidence to establish the *corpus delicti*. No person can be convicted of murder in New York State, unless the body of the victim be found and identified, or there be direct proof that the prisoner did some act adequate to cause death, and also did it in such a manner as to account for the disappearance of the body. It's up to us, then, to find the goods required by the law. And, take it from me—I propose to do so."

"What are your plans, chief?"

"Personally, to begin with, I am going after some finger prints," Nick replied. "Whether I can obtain the ones I want remains to be seen."

"Finger prints?" said Chick. "What are you driving at?"

"I found some on the oiled-silk wrappers in which the dummy papers were contained," Nick explained. "Oiled silk, you know, is capital material for retaining a finger print. I also found one on the seal on one of the packages."

"Great Scott! that's worth something," cried Patsy. "It must have been that of the man who prepared the dummies."

"And who, of course, also robbed the safe," Chick added.

"Both assumptions are reasonable," Nick replied. "With my lens I easily learned that some of the prints on the wax seal, which must have been pressed with a finger while the wax was still warm, correspond with others on the silk wrappers. I have a photographic copy of them, and now have wiped the wrappers perfectly clean. I think I may be able to get duplicate prints, or, at least, I am going to try."

"You want those of Antonio Gargoni?"

"Yes, and that humpback, Durango."

"I see the point. That's your own game, is it?"

"This very afternoon."

"And in the meantime, chief?" questioned Patsy.

"You may get after Theresa Gargoni," said Nick. "I am convinced that she has a hand in this business. I want her watched."

"Leave her to me, chief."

"She may make a move at any moment, moreover, so you'd better lose no time in getting next to her," Nick added. "You may phone me here this evening, in case you have anything to report."

"I'm wise," nodded Patsy, hastening his preparations to depart.

He left the office a few moments later, while Nick and Chick still remained, discussing their plans.

"The main thing, if these Italians are the parties we want, is to force them into some move which will be their own undoing," said Nick. "I think my visit of this afternoon will have that effect."

"And in that case?" Chick questioned.

"I think I know the move they most likely will make, Chick, and how we best can take advantage of it."

"What's your idea?"

"Listen. I can tell you in a nutshell."

Nick proceeded to do so, and the nature of what he imparted will appear in what followed.

CHAPTER VII.

GARGONI DECLARES HIMSELF.

Soon after four o'clock that afternoon Nick Carter again appeared in the Italian quarter. He had in his pockets two parcels wrapped in oiled silk and secured with strips of tape—one of them very imperfectly secured.

Threading his way through groups of swarthy, low-browed men, mingled with women with heads bare, or with shawls thrown lightly over them, the dark-eyed signorinas who thronged that locality, Nick once more appeared in Bayard Street and presently arrived at the door of the house occupied by Antonio Gargoni.

Mounting the front steps leading up to the door, Nick pulled the bell, and waited. Several minutes passed before the summons was answered, and then the door was opened only a few inches, disclosing the fat, flabby, red face of Madame Gargoni. She looked surprised at seeing the detective, while with eyes dilating distrustfully, she impulsively muttered:

"You again!"

"Yes, just once more, Madame Gargoni," said Nick. "I did not succeed, you remember, in seeing Mr. Durango this morning. Is he now at home?"

"No, he's not."

"Or your husband?"

"Both are out."

"Well, well, that's unfortunate," said Nick, quite as affably as if his mission was not a sinister one. "Do you know where they have gone?"

Madame Gargoni hesitated.

"I wish merely to talk with them for a few minutes," Nick added, in a way well calculated to relieve her of any serious misgivings.

The last appeared to have weight with her. She opened the door wider and drew back for him to enter.

"Come in," she said shortly. "I'll see if I can bring them. I'm not sure, but——"

She stopped abruptly, while Nick stepped into the entry, and then she closed the door and screamed up the stairs:

"Cardenio! Oh, ho, Cardenio! Come down here!"

Her cries were echoed by a shout from one of the upper rooms, that of a man who quickly appeared on the uncarpeted stairs. He was a slender, wiry man in the twenties, with a rather thin and sallow face, lighted with a pair of alert, shifty black eyes.

"Come down here," Madame Gargoni repeated, beckoning. "Run over to Derosa's place and look for the old man and Durango. If not there—well, hunt them up. You can find them. Tell Gargoni a man waits here for him—the man who came here this morning. Be quick, Cardenio."

The young man muttered a reply in Italian, waving both hands to signify his willingness, and then he hurried out of the house.

"One of my lodgers," Madame Gargoni explained. "I

have two. Come in and sit down while you wait. I must go. I have meat on the stove, so you——"

"Must wait alone—and quite right, Madame Gargoni," Nick interposed, after entering a cheaply furnished sitting room. "No apology is necessary. Look after your meat, by all means. I'll stay here till your messenger returns."

"He'll not be long. He'll soon find them."

Madame Gargoni nodded, with a smile that seemed somewhat forced, while she gave Nick this assurance of Cardenio's speedy success. Then she turned and waddled from the room, grossly fat and awkward, and Nick presently heard the snapping and creaking of the stairs leading to the basement kitchen, as they yielded under her great weight.

The room into which he had been invited overlooked the street, the two windows being about five feet above the sidewalk. The blinds of one of them were closed, but enough light came through the other to serve his purpose. He took a chair back of the blinds, through which he could stealthily gaze, and he had waited only a few minutes when the woman's prediction was verified.

Gargoni and Cardenio were approaching from a saloon some thirty yards away on the opposite side of the street. They were talking earnestly. Gargoni was frowning darkly, as if far from pleased with what he heard.

Durango was following about ten feet behind them, shuffling after them with his unsteady gait, with his head thrust forward, with his arms hanging lax, and with his humped figure swaying from side to side while he walked. There was no look of apprehension on his swarthy, bearded face, however, nor any other expression, in fact, for his crossed eyes had a habitual vacant stare that told of mental incapacity.

"A tricky trio, unless I'm much mistaken," thought Nick, while he watched them. "I may clinch that before leaving."

They entered a moment later, Cardenio at once returning upstairs.

Nick arose and met the others, saying agreeably:

"I owe that young man something for having found you so quickly, Mr. Gargoni. I'm sorry to trouble you again."

"Not so sorry but that you have done so," Gargoni replied, with a growl. "Sit down there, Durango. Don't stand staring like a wall-eyed ape. This man's not going to eat you, you rattlehead. He's in mortal terror of being suspected of the robbery and sent to prison," he added, again addressing the detective. "It's because he has a key to the store. The responsibility rattles him. He's all nerves and no brains."

Durango looked it. He sat huddled forward on the edge of a chair he obediently had taken, with his head drawn down between his humped shoulders, with his tremulous hands gripping his knees, while his dull, lack-luster eyes were turned with quick, fearful glances from one to the other. A more pitiable creature scarce could be conceived.

"There is no occasion for alarm," said Nick, replying to Gargoni. "As for you, Durango, pull yourself together."

"What do you want of him?" Gargoni suspiciously demanded.

"I only want to ask him a few questions and show him these two dummy packages which Lovell claims to have found in the safe," said Nick. "I understand that you were present, Durango, when he opened it this morning?"

Durango nodded, gasped, and gurgled for a moment, and then he huskily answered:

"Yes, sir, I was there."

"What were you doing?"

"I was dusting the office desks."

"You were, I suppose, surprised to see Lovell there so early?"

"Yes, sir, I was."

"Which caused you to watch him, no doubt, wondering why he came so early?"

"Yes, that's right. That's why I watched him."

"You must have seen him, then, when he took these two dummy packages from the safe?" said Nick.

He had taken them from his pockets and now tossed them upon a table in the middle of the room. The tape slipped from one of them and the wrapper of oiled silk flew open. A quantity of worthless papers fell upon the table.

"Humph!" Nick ejaculated. "My assistant must have tied them with a granny knot."

"He's no sailor, then," growled Gargoni; while Durango merely stared.

"Decidedly not," Nick declared.

Then, taking up the intact package, he handed it to Gargoni and said, apparently in explanation of his visit:

"These were substituted, Mr. Gargoni, for the genuine packages which contained the stolen bonds. Lovell claims that he found them in the safe this morning. It is barely possible, however, that he put them there, instead of removing them, thus aiming to complicate matters. If Durango was watching him, which I am led to infer from what your daughter has told me, he would have seen Lovell do so. I have called merely to inquire. That's why I came this morning. See the point?"

"Yes, I see," said Gargoni, but a threatening scowl still ruffled his heavy brows. "I see that much, all right."

He turned the package in his huge hand, fingering it gingerly while he examined it, and Nick replied carelessly:

"Well, that much is all there is to it. You saw Lovell take the packages out of the safe, Durango, did you?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

Durango had not stirred from his chair.

"That was after he found that the cash had been stolen?"

"It was."

"And you feel quite sure that these packages then were in the safe?"

"I do, sir," Durango asserted more forcibly. "I could swear to that."

"Good enough!" said Nick. "That settles one point on which I have had some doubt. I am greatly obliged to you, Durango, and there's nothing whatever for you to fear. Tie up this open parcel for me, like a good fellow, and try to make a knot that will hold. I'll wager you can do it better than my assistant, who, as Gargoni says, is no sailor. If you——"

"Stop a bit," Gargoni interrupted, with a sudden fierce snarl.

He strode nearer, sweeping the scattered papers aside. He thrust Durango back upon the chair, for the latter had risen to comply with Nick's request, and then the huge Italian swung round and faced the detective, frowning like a thundercloud.

"If you want those things tied up—tie them up yourself," he fiercely added.

Nick, who had been intently studying Durango's bowed figure for a moment, seeing him thus near for the first time, drew back and gazed at Gargoni.

"Well, well, what's the trouble?" he inquired, as if surprised by the ruffian's display of resentment.

"No trouble," snarled Gargoni. "No trouble, unless you make it."

"But——"

"Oh, you know what I mean! You didn't come here only to question him about these parcels. Tell that to the marines. I don't know what your game is, Carter, and I don't care. You've got nothing on anybody here, and you're not going to ring that poor devil into this mess. If you want those things tied up, tie them up yourself. He's not going to touch them. You sit quiet, Durango, or you'll wish you had."

Nick did not resent this passionate outbreak. He saw that Gargoni vaguely suspected his designs. He had made another discovery, nevertheless, which he thought would serve his purpose equally well, and which caused him to stick to the course he was shaping. He gazed at the scowling ruffian, and said:

"It strikes me, Gargoni, that you are making a big kick over nothing."

"Be satisfied, then, that you're not struck in a worse way," Gargoni retorted, with ugly significance. "I mean what I say, Mr. Carter."

"You appear to know me, Gargoni?"

"Oh, I know you, all right."

"Who informed you?"

"My girl, Theresa, when I told her this morning that you had been here."

"Ah, that explains it."

"Mark this, too: If you are making a mark of her, or of us, you'll get left. We don't know anything about either job. That's all I have to say, and if you've got all you came after, you'd better pick up and get out."

"You are not polite, Gargoni."

"Mebbe not, but I'm on the square—which is more than you can say just now."

"More than I shall say," Nick pointedly replied, while he gathered up the loose papers and thrust them into his pocket.

"Well, don't come here again until you can come on the square, or you'll get a warm welcome," threatened Gargoni. "Take that from me."

Nick faced him again for a moment before leaving.

"I hear you," he replied. "I may not have occasion to come again, Gargoni. If I do, however, remember this—I shall tell you precisely why I come."

"You will, eh?" Gargoni spoke with a sneer. "Remember this, too—you'll find me waiting for you."

Nick Carter did not reply. Without another glance at Durango, then crouching in abject fear back of the table, he turned abruptly around and left the house.

Durango immediately underwent a change, a most remarkable one. His look of fear vanished. An expression of diabolical ferocity leaped to his face. With hands clenched and with no sign of his shuffling gait, he darted around the table and glanced from the window, then turned and seized Gargoni's arm.

"Those were not the papers," he cried, in hoarse, excited whispers. "Those were not the papers found in the dummy. What's his game? What sent him here? Why the devil——"

"Shut up!" Gargoni threw him aside, with an oath, and strode into the entry. "I'll find out what his game is. If he threatens us—*carambo!* I'll wipe him off the earth! Cardenio—Cardenio!"

Cardenio already was on the stairs.

Gargoni, livid with vengeful fury, pointed to the door. "Get after him," he hurriedly cried. "He turned east. Watch where he goes and trail him until dark, and then report. You know where to find me. *Porcco Dio!* I'll fix him—I'll fix him!"

Cardenio understood. He darted out of the house and across the street, passing like an evil shadow between moving vehicles and back of crawling drays and vans, and within half a minute he had sighted his quarry and was on the track of the departing detective.

CHAPTER VIII.

A RENDEZVOUS.

Patsy Garvan was not idle while Nick Carter was striving, with even more than customary energy, to speedily clear from the network of evidence and circumstances involving him the friend in whose behalf he had set to work that morning.

One of the factors in the case, and one believed to be a chief factor, indeed, had been left to the sharp eyes and quick wits of Patsy Garvan.

It was seven o'clock that evening when, after having located his quarry in the Canal Street store late in the afternoon, he saw Theresa Gargoni come out and head for home.

Patsy shadowed her to the Bayard Street house and saw her enter, only to emerge, five minutes later, and hasten away, presently crossing the street and entering a narrow alley leading to the rear of a saloon—that from which Cardenio had brought Gargoni and Durango several hours before.

Bayard Street then was in darkness, or lighted chiefly by the faint glow from the unwashed windows of dismal shops, or the blurred red and yellow gleams from the numerous barrooms. The girl had passed within ten feet of him, however, and Patsy had instantly detected her paleness and the fiery flash of her black eyes.

"Gee! something's coming off," he said to himself, furtively watching her. "The chief must have got in part of his work. Has he started them on the run already? It's up to me to get in the running, then, for fair."

Patsy crossed the street and followed her.

There was no danger of detection. The sidewalks were thronged with lithe, swarthy men and olive-skinned women and girls, grouped in doorways and on the corners and curbings, most of them of lively raiment and bent upon conquests as dark as the eyes that served them for weapons.

English was at a discount. Guttural Italian prevailed, with an incessant clatter of tongues, excited gesticulations, and frequent quarreling. At any moment a stiletto might flash in the uncertain light, a cry follow a blow, and a red-handed murderer dart for safety into a dive, an alley, or one of the gloomy corners or black rat holes abounding that crowded and crime-infested quarter.

"Manuel Derosa's dive," thought Patsy, as he passed.

"One of the worst, and probably Gargoni's favorite hang-out."

It was a deep, smoky barroom, then filled with chattering patrons. Patsy knew there must be a rear entrance, or a rear room, at least, and he moved on and slipped quickly into the alley into which Theresa had vanished.

It led him into a small back yard, where the ground was drenched with the dregs from beer kegs and strewn with empty bottles. It was as dark as a pocket, save the faint glow that came through the single dusty window of a small back room in which an oil lamp was burning.

Stealing near enough to peer in, Patsy discovered the girl seated at a bare table with two men, whose identity was obvious from Nick's earlier descriptions.

"Gargoni and Durango," thought Patsy. "Madame Gargoni must have told her they were here. That's not all she has been told, by Jove! if her scowl signifies anything."

Stealing by a narrow back door, Patsy crouched below the sill of the window and listened. He then could overhear portions of the earnest discussion within, though it proved to be of brief duration.

"That's where we stand, girl, and that's what must be done," Gargoni was forcibly insisting. "We must get him, get him this very night, and in the way I have said, or the devil may get us. *Carambo!* You must see it! There's nothing else to it."

"Oh, I see it, and I can get him, all right, as far as that goes," snapped Theresa. "But how did you learn of this?"

"From Cardenio."

"Has he returned?"

"No. He phoned me."

"Where is he now?"

"He is still on his job."

"He'll put you wise, then, if another move is made tonight."

"*Sapristi*—yes! That's a sure thing."

"What do you say?" The girl swung round and addressed Durango. "Are you game?"

"That's a fat question," Durango snarled. "What else can be done? We've got to safeguard ourselves. That done—well, I then will have my say—my say!"

"You'll have what we hand out—that's what you'll have," Theresa retorted, with vicious asperity. "Don't threaten me, or you'll wish you hadn't. We now are running this business, the old man and me, and you'll do what I say."

"But I'll not——"

"Oh, don't argue over it," cut in the girl impatiently. "I'm not in the mood. What's the time?"

"Half past seven," growled Gargoni.

"I can get him by phone and land him in about two hours. Stop a bit! You'd better give me three. I have something to say to him before you show up. Come at eleven o'clock and you'll find him with me."

"Can you trick him as I have directed?"

"That will be easy—dead easy. Leave it to me."

"Set about it, then," Gargoni nodded. It's him—or us!"

"Him—not us!" Theresa fiercely hissed, while she arose and hastened to button her jacket. "I'll be off at once."

Patsy Garvan dropped flat upon the ground under the window.

Theresa Gargoni emerged from the door, closing it quickly, and in a moment she hastened through the alley.

Patsy came to a quick decision—and followed her.

"She may be out to get Nick," he reasoned. "I'll contrive to put him wise, in that case, and take steps to round up the whole gang. There's nothing for me in remaining to watch those two rascals. There's no knowing what move they may make, moreover, and it's easy to keep this vixen under surveillance."

Patsy again had his eye on the girl and was trailing her through Bayard Street.

Theresa Gargoni went home, remained about five minutes, then emerged, wearing a fashionable cloak and hat, with her face closely veiled. She at once hurried away in the direction of the Bowery. Ten minutes later she entered a large corner drug store, in which there was a row of four telephone booths.

Patsy briefly watched her from outside. Theresa entered the booth on the extreme right. That next to it was occupied. Patsy saw that he had no chance to overhear her.

"She's going to get in her work on some one," he muttered. "I can find out, by Jove! whether she phones the chief. I'll slip into another booth and call up the house. If the line is busy—well, that will pretty near settle it. If not busy, I can get the chief and give him a hint at what's doing."

Patsy was getting in his own work while thinking. Quickly adjusting a simple disguise with which he was always provided, he sauntered into the store and entered the booth on the extreme left.

In precisely one minute he was talking with Nick Carter.

What Patsy heard during the next few moments served to reassure him; and what he imparted, in the meantime, started Nick Carter on another mission that evening.

With a constant eye on his quarry, Patsy conversed with Nick until he saw Theresa Gargoni leaving the store, when he abruptly hung up the receiver and continued to shadow her.

Theresa Gargoni boarded an elevated train and rode to Twenty-third Street, where she entered a popular restaurant and concert hall and disappeared into the nearest curtained booth. A waiter came to serve her and she ordered a Benedictine cordial.

Patsy waited outside for a few minutes, then entered the front saloon and saw that one of the girl's hands was visible between the curtains, holding a handkerchief in plain view.

"A rendezvous," thought he. "The party to whom she phoned is to meet her here. She is displaying her handkerchief to guide him to the right booth."

It then was too early for the place to be in full blast, and Patsy presently sauntered in, easily avoiding observation by the girl, and, after tipping a waiter to aid him, he quietly entered the adjoining booth. The waiter walked that way a moment later and drew the curtains, as if the booth had been engaged for the evening by persons not yet arrived.

Twenty minutes passed.

Theresa Gargoni ordered another cordial.

Ten minutes later a man entered and joined her in the booth. He carried a suit case. There was no mistaking his plaid suit, his fashionable linen and cravat, his horseshoe scarfpin studded with diamonds, the solitaire on his finger, the guard chain and pendant attached to his figured vest—one who had seen Tom Lovell that day would not have forgotten these.

But the face of the man was—carefully disguised.

Patsy, with one ear to the partition of sheathing, heard Theresa's greeting.

"Great Scott!" she exclaimed. "Why that make-up, Mr. Lovell?"

"I told you I should come in disguise," was the reply.

"But why?"

"Because Nick Carter evidently suspects me of the murder. I told him I could be found in my suite this evening. He asked, you remember, where I could be found. I feared I might be watched, or be seen by him or one of his assistants."

"I see," nodded Theresa. "I guess you have done right. One would hardly know you."

"What have you learned about the case, that you phoned for me to meet you?"

"Something—but I cannot tell you here. You must go with me."

"Where?"

"To my home, Mr. Lovell, to begin with."

"But what the need of this other suit of clothing, which you directed me to bring?"

"I will tell you later. There is much to be done, and you may soil the suit you are wearing. We must go at once. There is no time to waste."

"You mystify me with——"

"Be patient," Theresa Gargoni interrupted. "I will explain everything."

Patsy watched them departing, noticed the flush the stimulant had brought to Theresa's cheeks, the perplexity with which her companion accompanied her, and then he stole out and after them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GIRL AND THE GAME.

It was after ten o'clock when Theresa Gargoni and her companion entered the house in Bayard Street.

Patsy Garvan had not lost sight of them until that moment. Though then informed of all there was under the surface, he could not foresee what would transpire in the house, nor that his services would not be required.

"I reckon I'd better make a bid to get in there," he said to himself, after they had entered. "There's no telling what will come off, providing any of the gang are there to lend the girl a hand in the game she is playing."

Patsy sauntered by the door and glanced up at the front windows. The blinds of both had been closed, and he could see only that an interior room had been lighted, into which the couple presumably had gone.

"I'll tackle the back of the house," he said to himself, after brief consideration. "I might be heard if I muckle with the front door."

Making his way to the area back of the house, Patsy found that the kitchen was lighted, but the lowered curtains prevented him from seeing who was in the room. After listening briefly, however, he heard the slow, heavy tread of a woman, and presently saw on the curtain a shadow of Madame Gargoni's corpulent figure.

Patsy stepped to the back door and tapped gently on one of the panels.

Madame Gargoni heard him—but had not heard the couple on the floor above. The circumstances were such that she took the knock for a signal, and she waddled hurriedly to the door and peered out.

There was no one on the low step outside, no one in sight.

Madame Gargoni, puzzled, stepped out and looked farther.

Patsy glided out of the gloom at one side and quietly closed the door.

The woman turned in the faint light that came from one of the curtained windows.

Patsy confronted her, with a revolver thrust under her nose.

"You keep quiet, Madame Gargoni," he said sternly, yet with voice lowered. "If you speak above a whisper, you'll never speak again. The game you people have been playing is ended. Not a sound, mind you, or you'll go up the river for a dozen years."

Madame Gargoni's red face had gone ghastly white. She needed no further warning, no explanation of the situation. She wilted like a rag, muttering something in Italian, presumably an imprecation, and Patsy quickly snapped a pair of handcuffs on her wrists.

Then, after warning her again of the result of any disobedience, he led her into the house, where he bound a towel over her mouth and secured her hands so that she could not remove it. These precautions having been taken, he grimly locked her in the kitchen closet, then crept cautiously up the entry stairs.

In the meantime, Theresa Gargoni had led her companion into a sitting room in the middle of the house, where she lighted the gas, then removed her street garments. There was a gleam of malicious exultation in her black eyes. Her darkly handsome face looked strangely white and cruel.

"Sit down, Tom," she said familiarly, while the latter stood his suit case near the wall. "You can remove that make-up, too, if you like. There'll be no one here to see you."

"I'd better keep it on," Lovell replied, taking a chair near the table. "It's not very easily adjusted, you know, and I shall want it on when I leave."

"Do as you please," said Theresa indifferently.

"Now, being well under cover, I want you to tell me what this means."

"That's just what I'm going to do," said the girl, with ominous intonation.

"What have you learned about the case? You stated by telephone that you had made a discovery, and that you could, with my assistance, not only find the stolen bonds, but also put me on the track of Gordon Lang's assassin. You would not let me notify Nick Carter, but said I must come alone. You said I must also bring an extra suit of clothing. What's the meaning of this?"

Theresa Gargoni took a chair directly opposite him, with the table between them. She spread her shapely white hands on it, gazing fixedly at it, and asked:

"Are you armed, Mr. Lovell, in case you should need a weapon?"

Lovell shook his head.

"I am not," he replied. "I never carry a revolver."

Theresa laughed in low, sinister fashion. She felt that she had him completely in her power. She took a small revolver from her pocket and showed it to him, while she poised it in her hand.

"I will lend you this one—perhaps," she said oddly.

"I may, however, need it for my own use. I am going to tell you now why I wanted you to meet me."

"You speak as if you had deceived me," said Lovell, gazing at her white face.

"So I have," she curtly answered.

"Indeed!"

"But not more than you deceived me—stop!" The girl's voice hardened viciously. "Don't stir from that chair. You're going to hear what I have to say."

Lovell had started as if to rise, but the weapon in the girl's hand suddenly covered him. He dropped back on the chair, and then said coldly:

"I appear to have no alternative."

"Nor have you."

"What's the meaning of this, Miss Gargoni? Your conduct is most extraordinary."

"I'll soon tell you what it means," replied Theresa, with bitter asperity. "You ought to know what it means. Do you talk to me of deception? You have not forgotten, I suppose, that you once made love to me."

"But you invited it, and we afterward agreed to end it," said the man, with a frown. "Why do you refer to that?"

"End it—yes!" Theresa spoke with a bitter sneer. "But there was only one cause for its ending. That was your doing, not mine. You tired of me, Lovell, and turned me down for the girl you soon are to marry, or think you are."

"I do not care to discuss Miss Wainright, Theresa, nor our past relations," Lovell coolly answered.

"You don't, eh?" snapped the girl. "Well, you will, all the same. I told you when you turned me down, Mr. Lovell, that I would get even with you, that I would have my revenge. I am having it. I am getting it now. You will never marry that girl, for you are helplessly in my power."

"Very evidently, too, a victim of trickery."

"Yes."

"A job of your invention, eh?"

"Yes."

"I ought to have suspected it. I would not have believed it of you, however, and you have been crafty enough to hide your hand. What do you intend doing?"

"Wipe you out of existence, Mr. Lovell, that all may suppose you have sought safety in flight, after robbing and killing your partner."

"Ah, I see! That's why you directed me to bring a suit case and extra clothing. You knew they would be missed from my room, and indicate that I have fled?"

"Yes."

The monosyllables came with vengeful asperity from the gray lips of the frowning girl. She seemed to find bitter delight in that he so quickly appreciated the treacherous knavery of which she was guilty. She nodded darkly, still covering him with her weapon, and added:

"You are already suspected of the murder. Your supposed flight will leave no room for a doubt. You will never again be seen or heard from. You're going to remain here until——"

"Until your confederates arrive, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"On the contrary, Miss Gargoni, I shall do nothing of the kind," said Lovell calmly.

"Oh, yes, you will!" Theresa laughed derisively. "If you move hand or foot—I will kill you."

"No, you won't."

"Move, then, and see!"

"You would make a serious mistake."

"Mistake?"

"You would kill the wrong man."

"Wrong——"

"You are not talking to Tom Lovell, but to—one of Nick Carter's assistants."

The brief interview came to a swift, sensational climax. Theresa Gargoni's companion was, indeed, Chick Carter—made up with most artistic likeness to the man he cleverly was impersonating.

The very move this gang of rascals would make had been anticipated, and provided for, by Nick Carter himself.

While he spoke, knowing what the effect would be, Chick deftly whipped off most of his disguise and cast it upon the floor.

Theresa Gargoni recoiled as if struck a blow. The weapon in her hand deviated for an instant—and that instant was all that Chick Carter required. He threw himself over the table, seized the girl's wrist, and in another moment he had her helplessly in his grasp—just as Patsy Garvan, after having listened briefly, hurried into the room.

Not a word, only a half-smothered scream, had come from the girl's lips. She knew that she had been outwitted, that her knavery was exposed, that the desperate game she had played was hopelessly lost, and she submitted as one of her kind quite often submits, with a silence more expressive than words—but not more expressive than her ghastly, distorted face and glaring eyes.

"Ah, you're here, Patsy!" Chick exclaimed, though not much surprised, for all three detectives knew that the lines of work engaging them were likely to converge at one point.

"You bet I'm here!" cried Patsy.

"Fasten these bracelets, then, with her hands behind her."

"No sooner said than done."

"Where is the old woman?"

"Locked in the kitchen closet," grinned Patsy.

"And Nick?"

"I know where to find him."

"Good enough!" Chick exclaimed. "We'll lose no time in doing so, then, lest he should need us."

Five minutes later, leaving both women in charge of a policeman quickly summoned, both detectives hastened from the house in search of Nick Carter.

CHAPTER X.

UNDER TRUE COLORS.

As has been stated, Patsy Garvan's communication by telephone sent Nick Carter on another mission that evening, one that again took him into the Italian quarter. Nick had failed to get all that he went after in the afternoon, having obtained, in fact, only half of it—the finger prints of Tony Gargoni.

As was remarked at the time, however, Nick had made another discovery which served him as well, if not better, and the significance of which sent him again in search of these two suspects. Patsy had told him where they probably could be found.

It was nearly ten o'clock when he again appeared in Bayard Street and headed straight for Manuel Derosa's dive.

A lithe, sinister rascal who had been stealthily following him watched him briefly from the opposite side of the street, then darted across and vanished into the alley leading back of the barroom. The shadow was the miscreant who, as Gargoni had put it, was still on his job.

Nick wore no disguise, and, though none in the smoky barroom recognized him, the entrance of a man of his appearance attracted some attention from the score of dark-featured men then in the place. To many they would have looked ferocious, though there was only a sort of brutish curiosity in their stare, and Nick paid no attention to them. He discovered Derosa near the end of the long bar, however, and, approaching him, he said quietly:

"Gargoni and a friend of his are in the back room. I'll go in and see them."

Derosa, a burly, bloated man in middle life, frowned suspiciously, and said:

"What d'ye want of——"

"Never mind what I want of them," Nick cut in, with significant intonation. "What I want of you is this—you make sure that we are not interrupted. Otherwise you'll get into hot water."

He displayed the edge of his detective badge while speaking, and Derosa wilted quickly, and muttered, though still with a sullen scowl:

"Go in, then, but there will be no reason for me to get in hot water. I'll be here; I'll let nobody come."

Nick did not reply. He saw that he was understood, and he turned on his heel and entered the back room, quickly closing the door.

Gargoni and Durango still were in earnest discussion. The former was puffing a clay pipe. A cloud of smoke filled the room. The upper part of the window had been lowered for ventilation.

Consternation seized the two scoundrels for a moment. Gargoni dropped his pipe. Durango started up, then drew back and shrank lower in his chair. An oath broke from the burly Italian.

"Oh, don't be alarmed," Nick said curtly, while he checked them with a gesture. "I don't want either of you fellows. I know the man I want, and am out looking for him. A party outside said you were here, however, and I thought I'd drop in and tell you what I have learned. You said I wasn't on the square this afternoon, Gargoni, you remember. I'll give it to you straight this time."

"You will, eh?" Gargoni glared suspiciously.

"That's what!" Nick nodded. "Keep your seats. I'll take this one. A very few words will set us right, I'm sure."

The only vacant chair was one between the table and the window, and Nick coolly seated himself directly opposite Durango, with Gargoni nearly so. He wanted both rascals where he could watch them.

"Set us right, eh?" Gargoni again questioned, evidently somewhat puzzled. "There's nothing to set right, that I know of."

"Is that so?" said Nick. "Don't you want me to relieve this poor fool of his fears? Your daughter will be glad to know, moreover, that I do not suspect Mr. Lovell. She was quite anxious about him this morning."

"He has been a good friend to her," growled Gargoni. "But I don't get you, Carter, all the same. You don't think Lovell did either job?"

"I know that he didn't."

"You do, eh? How'd you get wise to that?"

"I'll try to make it plain to you," said Nick, apparently meaning all he said in favor of the puzzled scamps. "You may not get me perfectly, Gargoni, as you say, but I think you'll understand. Durango may be a little hazy, however, and not grasp my meaning. I'm only going to tell you why Lovell couldn't have done either job."

"Mebbe I know more than you think," Durango said sullenly, with a resentful glare in his lowering eyes.

"Well, well, I hope you do," Nick replied. "I'll make it plain enough, then, to both of you."

"Get at it," said Gargoni impatiently. "You've got nothing on us, so what do we care? Get at it, I say!"

"You curb your impatience, Gargoni," Nick replied. "You'll presently see at what I'm driving, and how small a chance an ordinary crook has when he goes up against the work of a scientific detective. I've spent an hour or two in my laboratory since leaving you this afternoon. I have examined the stains of blood on Lovell's coat, also those on that of the murdered man, and you'll be surprised at what I have discovered."

"What was that?" Gargoni's heavy brows knit closer.

"It is not human blood."

"*Carambo!* How do you know that?"

"It is perfectly easy for science to tell human blood from that of the lower animals, or, in fact, that of one animal from that of another," Nick replied. "The blood of each crystallizes in certain fixed forms, and there can be no mistake. I tested particles of blood from both garments, Gargoni, and the result was the same."

"What result?"

"The blood on neither coat, Gargoni, is human blood. It is that of a dog."

"Dog be hanged!"

"I mean what I say."

"*Sapristi!* No man can tell that," growled Gargoni.

He spoke incredulously, but a more threatening fire was in his frowning eyes, and Durango's lips were twitching nervously.

"I can prove what I say," Nick insisted. "It gives rise to a very pertinent question, Gargoni: How came a dog's blood on the coats of both Lovell and Lang? If on only one coat, it might be reasonably attributed to chance, to an accident, or to any ordinary cause. Found on both coats, however, there is no denying that it must have been stealthily put there with some secret design."

"What d'ye mean?"

"To give color to this supposed murder."

"But who would do that?"

"One of the two men, of course, since no third party is involved."

"But——"

"Oh, there aren't any buts, Gargoni," Nick insisted. "The circumstances do not admit of any. The presence of a dog's blood on both coats shows, plainly enough, a deliberate attempt by one man to incriminate the other."

"You don't mean——"

"You know what I mean, Gargoni," Nick again interrupted. "There's nothing for you in pretending you do not. Nor is it material just when this scurvy trick was turned. The only important question is—who did it?"

"*Carambo!*" Gargoni uttered a snarl and lurched nearer in his chair. "You know who—mebbe!"

"I know who, for obvious reasons, did not do it," Nick pointedly answered. "Lovell, the suspected murderer, would not have deliberately tried to bring suspicion upon himself. That's plain to you, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's plain," Gargoni sullenly admitted.

"It must have been put there, then, by Lang himself, the supposed victim of the murder."

"Supposed—what do you mean by that? D'ye think that——"

"You'll presently learn what I think," Nick broke in. "I told you this afternoon, you remember, that when I came this way again I should tell you precisely why I came. Now, let's go a step further. Are you listening, Durango?"

"Yes, I'm listening."

The reply came in strained, hoarse, malevolent whispers, fairly forced between the twitching, bearded lips of the misshapen man. He, too, had drawn nearer the table. Not for an instant had his eyes left the stern, grave face of the detective. They had steadily increased in brilliancy until they were glowing like balls of fire under his bristling brows.

"That's right," said Nick. "Keep your ears open, Durango. Now, Gargoni, about those packages you saw this afternoon."

"Well, what about them?"

"When I examined them this morning, I found finger prints on the wrappers. Oiled silk is an excellent material for retaining the marks of one's fingers."

"Mebbe it is, but that's nothing to me."

"More than you think, Gargoni," said Nick. "On one of the wax seals, moreover, I found another print—that of a finger pressed upon the wax while it still was warm. You see, of course, that that must have been the finger of the man who prepared the dummy packages—and who also committed the robbery."

Gargoni drew up his huge figure with more ominous composure.

"Yes, I see that," he admitted.

"And that's why you suspected, this afternoon, Gargoni, that I had something up my sleeve."

"What d'ye mean?"

"You knew that I was after your finger prints, also those of this man," said Nick, with more austerity. "You did not care about your own—but you prevented me from getting those of Durango."

"I did not!" Gargoni declared. "*Carambo!* Why should I care more about his than my own? I only stopped you because——"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," Nick insisted, with an indifferent wave of his hand. "There are more ways than one to kill a cat."

"Or a man!" Gargoni's teeth met with an ugly snap.

"That's right, too," Nick admitted. "But there'll be no need of any killing."

"*Sapristi!* Don't be too sure of that."

"Your threats cut no ice with me, Gargoni," Nick said sternly. "You will presently see that I am right. Blood is not all that I discovered on Gordon Lang's overcoat."

"What else?"

"I found on the collar a deposit of fine white scales, which the river water had failed to entirely remove."

"Scales, eh?" Gargoni darkly questioned. "What kind of scales?"

Durango was twisting in his chair, with his hands rigidly clenched and with every feature of his swarthy face drawn and distorted.

Nick had not appeared to notice him for several moments.

"I examined them with a microscope," he replied. "They were scales of dry eczema, a very common disease of the skin and scalp. They are frequently profuse in the thick hair on the back of one's head. Lang was thus afflicted, as the collar of his coat plainly showed."

"What of it? What if he was?" snarled Gargoni, with reviving impatience. "What do we care for all this?"

"Very little, perhaps," said Nick. "Much less than you would, Gargoni, if I had not made an unexpected discovery this afternoon, when you prevented me from getting Durango's finger prints."

"Discovery—what d'ye mean?"

"The same telltale scales on the coat of another."

"Another——"

"This man's coat, Gargoni."

Durango had started up as if to bolt.

Nick's right arm shot over the table. In an instant he had the terrified rascal by the collar.

Durango uttered a single fierce snarl, and began to struggle. His coat came off—and the hump between his shoulders came with it.

Nick had sprung up. He jerked the squirming man toward him, snatched away his wig and beard, and then was revealed in his true, miserable colors, the missing partner of the man suspected of his murder—Gordon Lang himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAP CLOSED.

Such episodes as that which ended the interview held in Derosa's back room transpire in a hundredth part of the time taken to describe them.

Nick no sooner had laid hand upon Durango, or, in reality, Gordon Lang, than Gargoni also was upon his feet, uttering a roar like that of an infuriated bull.

He sprang around the table to reach the detective, throwing up one hand, and a stiletto gleamed in the lamplight.

Nick Carter did not speak, but his clenched fist shot straight out from his shoulder and met the desperate ruffian halfway. It caught him fairly on the chin, and Gargoni went backward, headlong over a chair, landing in a quivering heap in one corner of the dismal room.

Gordon Lang, frantic with fear and fury, was still struggling wildly in the detective's grasp. His desperate efforts to escape, together with the blow Nick had dealt Gargoni, served to throw the detective nearer to the window, toward which his back was turned.

Like a flash, a lithe figure outside leaped upon the sill, that of the spy, Cardenio. His head and shoulders came through the lowered upper section, and a slung shot rose above Nick Carter's head.

It never fell, however. Loud cries came from without, shouts came from Chick Carter and Patsy. They had arrived in the nick of time. Cardenio disappeared from the window as if some tremendous power had yanked him

backward, as was really the fact. In less than ten seconds the rascal was flat on his back in the rear yard, with handcuffs on his wrists and ankles.

Nick Carter, in the meantime, clapped a pair of manacles around Lang's wrists and forced him to a chair in one corner.

"Sit there, you cur!" he commanded sternly. "Your dirty game of treachery is ended, Mr. Lang, and you might as well take your medicine quietly. If you stir from that chair I'll send a bullet after you."

"I'll not stir," whined the wretch. "My God, I'm ruined—ruined!"

"Ruin of your own making," snapped Nick. "It serves you right."

He had drawn a revolver while speaking, and Chick and Patsy entered, bringing in Cardenio, just as Gargoni came out of dreamland and scrambled to his feet.

Derosa had appeared at the door, with a great crowd of Italians backing him, but one look at the three detectives and the weapons then in view restrained them from any attempt at violence.

Gargoni vented a fierce snarl of contempt when he realized the situation, and he made no move to resist arrest.

"*Carambo!*" he exclaimed, gazing around. "You think you've done a big job, you Carter?"

"I'm satisfied," said Nick. "I've landed the rascals I came out to get."

"But you'll not hold us," sneered the burly Italian.

"Won't I?"

"*Sapristi*—no!"

"Wait and see."

"You've got nothing on us, as I've told you," growled Gargoni. "If Lang wanted to take the bonds and cash out of his safe, he had a right to do so. If he wanted to put up this job on his partner, hating him because of jealousy, it's no more than other men have done. He's got the cash and bonds. They're in his room in my house, where he has been staying off and on while he and Cardenio took turns in playing the double part necessary to his little game. Go ahead and pull us in, if you like, but you'll not hold us. Any good lawyer can get us out. You've got nothing on us."

"I'll see that you are sent up for conspiracy, then, one and all of you," Nick declared sternly. "You'll get all that's coming to you—take my word for that."

There was very little more. Within half an hour all of the gang were lodged behind bars, the stolen property recovered, and Tom Lovell informed of all of the details of the case. His relief and gratitude were all one might have expected, though he was utterly floored when he learned of the treachery of his partner.

Gordon Lang made a full confession, told how he had, with the aid of Cardenio, fixed up the evidence incriminating Lovell, afterward leaving the ferryboat in disguise. But the confession did not save him, nor any of his confederates, for one and all received the punishment they deserved.

THE END.

In the story entitled "The Death Chamber; or, Nick Carter's Ounce of Prevention," which will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 38, out May 31st, you will read of as baffling a collection of criminal circumstances as ever confronted a crime investigator. Only a person of Nick Carter's discernment and acumen could solve this strange riddle of crime. The Italian and his daughter, who figured in the story you have just read, also take a prominent part in this narrative.

Arrested at the Tomb;

Or, SHERIDAN KEENE ON A CURIOUS CASE.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

THE GAYLORD SWINDLE.

"Do you realize, Mr. Berkley, that the life of Calvin Miller may be seriously in jeopardy at this very moment?"

"Certainly I realize it."

"Then, sir," said Sheridan Keene, with some feeling, "the sooner I land in Maine and in his immediate locality, the better."

"So I think, Detective Keene. When can you leave here?"

"By to-night's Pullman."

The two speakers were seated in the elegant private office of Mr. Amos K. Berkley, the genial and venerable president of the great Federal Life Insurance Company, in the company's new building in Milk Street, Boston.

He held a letter in his hand, and his gravely earnest eyes were raised to the face of the young detective.

They had been discussing one of those mysterious and puzzling cases that occasionally come up in the offices of insurance companies, but this one seemed to be more than usually perplexing.

Indeed, it had only been after the insurance company felt itself unable to cope with some threatened swindle that the aid of the police had been called in.

Mr. Berkley's request to Chief Watts that he should send him one of his best men had resulted in Detective Keene being detailed on the case. On his arrival at the Federal Insurance Company's office he was immediately ushered into the presence of the president.

"You look like quite a young man, Detective Keene, to be confided with so delicate and perilous a mission as the one we require executed," were the president's first words, after Detective Keene had introduced himself.

"Perhaps, sir, my head is older than my countenance," said Sheridan Keene dryly.

Sheridan Keene's response pleased Mr. Berkley. Despite Keene's youthful exterior and unassuming manner, his answer had indicated a man of conscious ability and power.

"As a matter of fact, Detective Keene, we do sometimes find old heads on young shoulders," replied Mr. Berkley. "Chief Watts recommends you so highly in this letter of introduction, moreover, that I am satisfied that his judgment in this case is more reliable than my discernment. Take a chair, Detective Keene, and I will tell you of what this mission consists."

Keene accepted the chair indicated.

Mr. Berkley laid aside the letter which the detective had brought with him from Chief Inspector Watts, then

turned his chair so as to face Keene more directly, first glancing at the office door to be sure that it was closed.

"Detective Keene," he began, "I have suspicions that our company is in imminent danger of being defrauded."

"And the felony has not yet been perpetrated?"

"That is the idea precisely," nodded Mr. Berkley. "I mention this at once, because it is just possible that the case may not require official interference."

"Is there a large amount involved, sir?"

"About one hundred thousand dollars."

"Life insurance?"

"Life insurance, and all on the life of one person. Doubtless you are well aware, Detective Keene," added Mr. Berkley, "that life insurance companies are occasionally victimized by unscrupulous persons and fraudulent methods, and sometimes swindled out of very large sums of money."

"Perfectly, sir," bowed Sheridan Keene.

"This case, however," continued Mr. Berkley, "is somewhat different from those we usually have to deal with in that there are several other companies involved. I am acting, understand, for both the Federal and also for these other companies."

"I understand you, sir," answered Keene; then he continued: "One hundred thousand dollars is quite a large insurance for a single individual to carry on his life."

"It is a very large insurance, Detective Keene."

"It is an unfortunate fact that crime is sometimes invited in this way," said Keene gravely. "Who, Mr. Berkley, is the holder of the policies to that amount?"

"The gentleman's name is Calvin Miller," was the reply. "He is the president of the Great Northern Lumber Company, located in the State of Maine."

"How old a man is he?"

"He is now about fifty-four."

"A man of high social standing?"

"Very," nodded Mr. Berkley. "And he has been identified with the lumber business along the Penobscot for the past thirty years."

"I presume, then, that he is wealthy?"

"He is rated at a quarter of a million."

"Then, if the rating is correct, he carries a life insurance nearly equal to half of his entire fortune."

"Precisely, Detective Keene."

The detective drew his chair a little nearer. His face had become more grave, and the glow of his earnest eyes indicated a steadily increasing interest. His fine, forceful countenance had now won the other completely.

Keene broke the momentary silence.

"Aside from the aggregate of these policies, Mr. Berkley," he asked, "have you any reason for suspecting that a fraud upon the several insurance companies is contemplated?"

"Yes, Detective Keene, I have," replied President Berkley. "There is an anterior case to that of Calvin Miller, however, and I first wish to call your attention to the former."

"It has a bearing, then, on the Miller case?"

"Decidedly. I will state the facts as concisely as possible."

And the venerable gentleman opposite began the following extraordinary statement:

"The anterior case mentioned," said he, "refers to a policy issued by our company, insuring the life of one Thomas Gaylord. On the twelfth of September, nineteen-three, an application for a policy was regularly made through our agent in the city of Worcester, for an insurance of five thousand dollars on the life of said Gaylord."

"I follow you, sir."

"The customary reports, relating to the application and to the applicant, were submitted to me by our agent, and Gaylord appeared for physical examination before our medical examiner in Worcester, one Doctor George Varney. The report of the physician was acceptable, stating that the subject was then in good health; and, as the application appeared regular, and our agent was believed to be reliable, the policy was executed. Eight months later, Detective Keene, Thomas Gaylord died of consumption."

"Of consumption?"

"Precisely, sir."

"Is it not rather unusual, that a man reported to be in good health in September," observed Keene, "should have died of consumption in the following May?"

"It is so unusual, Detective Keene, that before paying the assignee named in the Gaylord policy we made an investigation. We suspected that a man in perfect health had been substituted in the place of Gaylord when the medical examination was made by our physician, Doctor Varney."

"Could you establish that to have been the fact?"

"We could not," replied President Berkley. "Unfortunately Doctor Varney had died the previous January, and hence we could not have his personal identification of the subject examined."

"That was bad, sir."

"Our agent stated, however, that he was positive that Gaylord had been properly examined, and that the policy had been properly drawn up and executed. The description of the subject, therein contained, so nearly corresponded to the physical characteristics of Gaylord that we decided not to contest the case, and accordingly five thousand dollars was paid to the assignee through our agent in Worcester."

"What was the agent's name?" inquired Keene, drawing out his notebook.

"William Bennett."

"Is he now in your employ?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Berkley, quite decisively.

"Do you know where he is located?"

"I will refer to that a little later, if you please. You may ask any other question, however."

"Who was the assignee named in the policy?"

"Nellie Gaylord, the wife of the deceased."

"Do you know where she now may be found?"

"I will refer also to her a little later."

"I infer that you know in both cases," smiled Sheridan Keene, as he noted the woman's name. "Now, sir, in brief, you thought that you could not prove that Gaylord was not the man examined by Doctor Varney, and, rather than undertake a suit at law to avoid paying the policy, you settled with the assignee at its face value?"

"Precisely, Detective Keene."

"Were any comparisons made between the signatures of Gaylord on the policy and other specimens of his hand-

writing executed at about the time the application was made?"

"Yes, such a comparison was made, and the likeness was so exact that we decided the signatures were genuine."

"Did you submit the question to an expert in chirography?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because," replied President Berkley; "if that was the only tangible evidence we could offer in court, we knew it would be useless to undertake a legal fight."

"And you could secure no other evidence?"

"None warranting a suit at law, sir."

"What was Gaylord's business at the time he applied for insurance?"

"He was a butcher, and lived near the town of Natick."

"Character good?"

"It was said to be."

"Have you anything further to offer relative to this case of Gaylord?"

"Merely a general statement of my personal opinion, although I could not, neither then nor now, prove the facts," replied Mr. Berkley. "I now fully believe that Gaylord knew absolutely nothing about this policy on his life. I think that a substitute was examined by Doctor Varney; that Gaylord's signatures to the policy were forgeries, and that at least three persons were concerned in a conspiracy by which the Federal Company was successfully defrauded of five thousand dollars."

"One the man's wife, Nellie Gaylord?"

"Precisely! Also William Bennett, our agent at that time."

"I have the name, sir. And the third?"

"There I am at sea, Detective Keene," said President Berkley gravely. "But I refer to the man who must have impersonated Gaylord at the time Doctor Varney made an examination of the alleged applicant for the policy."

"Can you give me no information whatever that might lead to establishing the man's identity?"

President Berkley shook his head.

"Absolutely none," he replied. "We have not the least idea."

"Yet you have the policy said to have been executed by Gaylord, containing his signatures," suggested Keene.

"Yes, we have that."

"Will you allow me to keep it for a time?"

"Gladly, sir, if you can use it to any advantage," replied Mr. Berkley, touching a bell on his desk. "I will have one of my clerks procure it for you."

"Meantime," added Sheridan Keene, "I will hear what you have to impart about the Miller case, which I understand to be the one you want me to investigate. I think you implied that this case of Gaylord appears to have some suspicious relation to it."

"Rather, sir, some of the parties involved in it are the same!" exclaimed President Berkley.

"What do you mean?"

"Detective Keene," said Mr. Berkley pointedly, "I mean that Nellie Gaylord is now the wife of Mr. Miller, who is carrying a life insurance of one hundred thousand dollars!"

"Ah, is that so?" cried Keene, with a quick flash of his dark eyes.

CHAPTER II.

A LIFE THREATENED.

The occasion for Sheridan Keene's exclamation became apparent in his next words.

"Then," said he, "if the Gaylord case was indeed a fraud, this woman may possibly be a very dangerous person, if not guilty even of having hastened Gaylord's death in some way."

"That has occurred to me, also."

"Mr. Berkley, when did you discover that Nellie Gaylord is now the wife of Calvin Miller, the Maine lumberman?"

"Rather more than two years ago," was the reply. "Mr. Miller was insured in our company for ten thousand dollars. The application was made through our agent in Bangor, Mr. John Berkley."

"Is John Berkley a relative of yours?"

"He is my nephew, Detective Keene, and a man I know to be perfectly honorable, and of good judgment and executive ability."

"Go on, sir."

"We looked Miller up, and found him reputed a man of wealth and high social standing. It appeared perfectly natural that he should wish to take out an insurance to that amount, as he had been married about three years previous, and the assignee named in the policy was his wife, Eleanor Miller."

"Eleanor Miller, instead of Nellie Gaylord, eh?"

"Precisely," nodded Mr. Berkley. "Yet I, of course, had no thought of that at the time."

"Naturally not."

"The usual forms were complied with," continued Mr. Berkley, "and a policy insuring Miller for ten thousand dollars was executed, his wife being the assignee named."

"About a month ago," continued Mr. Berkley, "my nephew in Bangor incidentally discovered that Miller is also carrying a policy for ten thousand dollars in the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. He reported the fact to me, and I called upon the president of that company to make inquiries. I found the report not only to be correct, but also that the application for that policy had been received through one of the Massachusetts company's agents in Maine, who has an office both in Bangor and Skowhegan. The name of that agent is William Bennett."

"Not the same Bennett who was in your employ seven years ago?"

"Precisely the same, sir!"

"You begin to interest me," said Sheridan Keene, in his quietly significant way. "Please continue."

"I carried my investigation a little farther," Mr. Berkley went on, "and I learned that Bennett is acting as agent for several other life insurance companies and three fire insurance companies. It took me some little time to unearth all of these facts, for I exercised considerable care lest he should become informed of my sudden interest in him and his doings."

"A wise precaution," nodded Keene approvingly.

"To make a long story short, Detective Keene, I found that Calvin Miller is now insured in these several companies to the amount stated. This, however, may be perfectly legitimate, and only the fact that William Bennett was the agent through whom most of the applications had been made led me to become suspicious."

"Your previous experience with Bennett perfectly justifies a suspicion, sir."

"So I thought," bowed President Berkley.

"What further steps did you take?"

"I sent one of my clerks to Maine to make sure that Bennett was the identical man formerly in our employ. This was easily established to be the fact. I also instructed my clerk, who had been one of the investigators of the Gaylord case, to quietly get a look at Mrs. Eleanor Miller, the assignee in the policy involved."

"Did he do so?"

"He succeeded in seeing her, unobserved, and at once recognized her as the former wife of Thomas Gaylord, to whom we had paid five thousand dollars on the death of her husband. That, Detective Keene, is the situation."

As Mr. Berkley finished, Detective Keene leaned forward and uttered the words which open this story. He realized that Miller's wife might be plotting, if not personally effecting, his death, in order to secure this insurance.

All his detective instinct had been aroused by the disclosures Mr. Berkley had just made, and he resolved to lose no time in getting on the track of the criminal.

"I certainly think it is a case warranting investigation," said Sheridan Keene, with a peculiar smile, as he rose to take his leave. "The combination of circumstances is certainly very suspicious."

"Yet I do not wish to take decisive action upon suspicious circumstances only," President Berkley gravely objected. "From all I can learn, Miller is an honest man, and his means warrant his carrying this large insurance, if he so desires. It is quite possible that he contemplates no fraud, and I cannot wisely prefer charges against him without having more evidence than mere conjectures, based upon the fact that his wife was the widow of Thomas Gaylord, and that William Bennett was the agent in both cases. As we did not refuse to pay the Gaylord policy, moreover, and sustain a suit at law, we should be lamentably weak in now reviving that case as evidence against Miller, who, so far as we can learn, knew nothing of that case at the time, nor of the parties involved."

"That is true."

"What I now want of you, Detective Keene," concluded President Berkley, "is to make a quiet investigation of the affair."

"I will do so, sir."

"I want it done, moreover, without the knowledge of the several parties involved."

"I will insure that that is avoided."

"Yet their present designs, if felonious, must be discovered."

"I think you may safely leave that to me, sir."

"And if you decide that Miller is honest in these transactions, and that the policies have been taken out with a legitimate motive, I want no disclosures made that may reveal our suspicions and the extent of our investigation."

"There shall be no disclosures made, in that case," replied Keene.

"Very good!" replied Mr. Berkley. "I will give you a check to cover early expenses, and you may draw on me at sight for——"

"Pardon, sir! I shall have no communication with the Federal Insurance Company while I am in that neighborhood in your employ," interposed Keene. "It possibly may be the scene of a diabolical conspiracy, if not, indeed, already the scene of some hideous crime. I say this in confidence to you, sir, as being what my detective instinct tells me lies under the surface of such facts as you have revealed. Whether Calvin Miller is honest or not, sir, I believe his life to be in imminent danger."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Berkley. "Yet I admit that you may be right."

"I am sure of it, sir," said Keene decisively. "I shall leave for Maine to-night."

"What coöperation do you desire from this end, Detective Keene, if any?"

"I have but one word to say about that, sir," was the reply.

"And that?"

"From the time I leave this office as a detective in your employ, sir, I want this case and its investigation left entirely to me, without interference or disclosures of any kind on your part, regardless of what occurs," said Keene, with forcible earnestness. "On no other condition will I undertake the investigation."

President Berkley now began to see the stuff of which Sheridan Keene was made. He impulsively extended his hand, saying warmly:

"I give you my word, sir, the investigation shall devolve entirely upon you."

"Regardless of what occurs?"

"Precisely, sir."

"And without disclosures tending to betray your present suspicion and the work on which I am engaged?"

"I give you my word to that effect, sir."

"With that understanding, President Berkley, I will accept the case."

"Very good, sir!"

"Now write me a line of introduction to your nephew in Bangor, and hand me the old Gaylord policy, and I will bid you good morning."

"And you will start for Maine?"

"To-night!"

CHAPTER III.

ACCIDENT, SUICIDE, OR MURDER?

"Thet aire's a tough, hard nut to crack, stranger, an' mebbe you'd know it as well as me, hed yer done sarvice as coroner on as many dead bodies as I hev," vouchsafed long, lanky, and angular Jim Barry, nodding emphasis at the man seated near the flat, leather-top desk on which this rural dignitary was himself perched, and which served him as frequently for a seat as for the purpose intended.

For Jim Barry's legs were so long that, as their owner expressed it, "the hinge in 'em come higher'n the seat of a chair, an' made sittin' durned uncomfortable!"

The man to whom he had addressed the above was Sheridan Keene.

The detective had arrived in Bangor early that day, only to read in the morning local papers the startling news that Calvin Miller had met his death by accidental drowning the previous evening.

The details of the accident were but meagerly reported, however, not having been received when the papers went to press; and the several stories of the calamity were devoted chiefly to a history of Miller's successful business career, his sterling integrity as a man, and his identification with the lumber business along the Penobscot.

Concerning the accident, it was stated only that Miller had gone out about dusk to survey a jam of logs in the

river near the Great Northern Company's mills; and that, while attempting to examine the same from some rather hazardous point of vantage, he had fallen into the river and had been carried under the jam.

"I'm by no means ready to swallow that yarn!" was Keene's immediate decision, on reading the several reports. "Evidently I am just one day too late to save Miller from death—but not too late to bring his murderers to justice! Now to run them down at a canter!"

In the light of the information he already possessed, he felt very confident of the result; but he little dreamed of the desperate contingencies involved.

He delayed in Bangor only to wire back to President Berkley that Miller was dead, and that any action on the part of the several insurance companies, or their agents, must be rigidly delayed pending his investigations.

The message having been forwarded, he took the first train up the river to the thriving town in which the mills of the Great Northern Lumber Company were located.

Although a total stranger in the place, Keene very speedily ascertained what resident would be most likely able to give him the information he wished first of all to acquire; and within a half hour of setting foot in town he was seated in the office of Mr. Jim Barry, above introduced.

Within a circle of twenty miles, strong Jim Barry was a well-known figure. He did a little law in a crude but effective fashion; he was a justice of the peace and a notary public; he had been district coroner for nearly a generation, and for ten years in earlier life he had filled the boots of county sheriff, and had, during this term of office, incidentally emptied the boots of as many desperate offenders.

He was rough, uncouth, and but narrowly educated, yet the "horse" sense of Jim Barry was reputed fit to bank on, and what Jim Barry said round about the local diggings invariably "went."

He looked down at Sheridan Keene out of his cold, gray eyes, twisted his sparse chin whiskers to a sharp point, spat out the broom straw he had been busily chewing, and now supplemented his first observation with the remark:

"I reckon you're right, stranger, when yer say a violent death allas results from accident, suicide, or murder; but, as I said afore, the deciding which o' the three is correct aire sometimes a tough, hard nut to crack."

"Right you are, Mr. Barry," assented Sheridan Keene, with a genial headshake. "I suppose you were pretty well acquainted with Mr. Miller, weren't you?"

"Me!" exclaimed Barry, much as if he could not quite understand the need for such a question. "Waal, I should say I wuz! I reckon I knew old man Miller better'n any man along the Penobscot, from source to mouth. Him and me's been hand an' glove for nigh forty years, stranger. Slept together as kids; fit an' played together as boys; an' as men hev allas hung together like brothers. I should say we wuz acquainted, stranger!"

"Pretty square man, wasn't he?"

"Squar' as a brick, sir, every time! Word as good as his bond! Stiff as an oak stick in all his business dealings, sir, an' a man could allas tell where he'd find Calvin Miller."

"Can you inform me how this accident occurred, Mr. Barry?"

"Waal, I reckon I can," nodded Barry, pushing back his slouch hat from his forehead. "'Twas like this, stranger, an' I get it from Dave Graff, who saw the hull thing: Cal kem out o' the mill just afore dusk, along with Dave, an' the two on 'em went down to the river to look at a jam of logs atween the dam and the lock. You see, stranger, the river runs high i' the spring, an' the logs comin' down jam up in durned bad shape at times, an' it's an allfired job to clear 'em."

"So I've heard, sir."

"'Tis, fur a fact! Waal, sir, Miller went out on the jam along with Graff, so Dave tells it, so's they could get a look at the mess from the outside. It was comin' kind o' dark about that time, I reckon, an' Miller must hev lost his footin' on the logs, or else didn't see his way overwell. For the fust thing Graff knew, Miller had plunked down atween some o' the loose logs, and gone out o' sight under the hull cussed mess."

"What did Mr. Graff do?" inquired Keene, whose face in no way depicted the thought which had risen in his mind.

"Dave ran back and gave the alarm, as quick as ever he could, an' some o' the mill hands went down with him to try to get the body. But, Lord sakes alive, stranger! They mout as well 'a' tried to hook up the bottom o' the stream."

"They did not find it?"

"Find it!" echoed Barry, with dismal derision. "They never did, an' never will! Cal Miller went down among them logs, he went down to stay, sir, and if ever the man's body should show up ag'in, it'll be crushed out o' shape an' out o' recognition."

"By the logs?"

"Aye, sir," nodded Barry, "by the logs."

"Yet I noticed fully a hundred men searching the river between the bridge and the mill dam," said Keene. "From that I inferred that they hoped to recover the remains."

"Thet's Dave Graff's doings, an' Mrs. Miller's," explained Barry, with a growl. "They figger the body may hev gone under the jam, and'll be carried down the river by the strong flow o' the stream. But 'tain't likely, sir; an' if they had any horse sense they'd know it. Ther body'll be ground to jelly afore this day's done, sir, an' be swept away piecemeal by the stream. No, no, stranger, they'll never find the body o' poor Cal Miller!"

"A sad accident," said Keene quietly.

"Aye, sir, it was!"

"Miller was married, I think I understood you to say?"

"'Bout four years ago, sir."

"To a lady living here?"

"No, stranger, not here. She was a widow named Gaylord, an' hailed from somewhere in Massachusetts. I reckon Miller loved her years ago, afore she was married the fust time, though I'm not sure on it. But I've heerd suthin' o' the kind, sir; and I know Cal was anxious enough to get after her, as soon as he l'arned her fust husband was dead. They were married 'bout four years ago."

"Nice-looking woman?"

"Ruther!" nodded Barry. "An' I reckon she led Cal quite a canter even arter they were hitched?"

"How so?"

"Waal," drawled Barry, in a ruminating way, "I reckon she's been pretty thick with Dave Graff, or so it's said, and I guess Miller was summut jealous. Still, stranger,

she hed him well under her thumb, an' there's allas the devil to pay when a man knuckles down to a woman. He allas did what she said, right enough, an' thet's about the hull of it."

"You don't imagine, Mr. Barry," inquired Keene, "that Miller committed suicide last night because of his wife's conduct, do you?"

"Not by a jugful!" cried Barry, with a decisive shake of his head. "He'd never hev done thet, sir! 'Twan't like him."

"Then the theory of suicide in this case of a violent death may be set aside as wholly improbable," observed Keene.

"Aye, sir, it may!"

"Who is this man you call Graff?"

"Dave Graff? He's the manager round about the mill."

"An' old resident here?"

"Not he!" cried Barry, with a rather grimly significant intonation. "He showed up here shortly arter Miller married Mrs. Gaylord, and the woman claimed he was a second cousin o' hers, an' got Miller to give him his present job in the mill."

"Where does Graff hail from—do you know?"

"Waal, no, I don't; I reckon no one round about here can tell thet. As a matter o' fact, stranger, Dave Graff ain't much liked in these diggings."

"Why is that? Is he off color in any way?"

"No, 'tain't thet. But he's a stiff sort o' chap, an' don't make friends overeasy."

"How about Mrs. Miller?"

"Waal, she seems like one o' the same push. The wimmen folks don't like her."

"At about what hour did this accident occur, Mr. Barry?"

"'Bout half past six, I reckon."

"Had the mills shut down for the day?"

"Yes, sir, same as usual. They knock off at six, sir."

"I presume, then, that there were not many of the mill hands about to have observed the accident?" remarked Keene inquiringly.

"None at all, stranger!" replied Barry, drawing no special inference from Keene's seemingly indifferent questions. "What few heard Dave Graff's yell for help were out in the front part of the mill gettin' ready for home."

Sheridan Keene arose to his feet, and tendered the speaker a cigar.

He had ascertained the general character of the local situation, and acquired what information he wanted before tackling the case in a more energetic way.

"Thankee, stranger!" exclaimed Jim Barry, as he accepted the cigar. "An' now, sense you've pumped me all yer want to, sposen yer tell me what it's all about."

Keene smiled pleasantly at this display of curiosity, and handed Mr. Barry a card.

"My name is Green, and here is my card," he said, with a curious little smile. "I am a press representative, sir, and wanted the facts of this accident from some thoroughly reliable citizen."

Barry silently surveyed him, with a half-doubtful squint, for a moment, then dryly rejoined:

"Yer name may be Green, stranger, but I'm durned if yer look like a green un!"

Sheridan Keene laughed lightly, and now extended his hand.

"Howsomever, stranger," added Barry, "call ag'in when yer happen round this way and aire' lookin' fur p'ints, an' ole Jim Barry'll give 'em to yer."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Barry," nodded Keene, shaking his hand. "I will certainly do so."

"An', say: I reckon I know as much about things an' people round here as any man in leather. In fact, stranger, if I had a leather back, I'd be a durned good local 'cyclopedia! Run in ag'in, stranger, when you come this way."

TO BE CONTINUED.

A Story of a Telegraph Operator.

By EDWARD RUMLEY.

In my early youth I left home to avoid the harsh treatment of a passionate stepfather, and to endeavor to obtain a livelihood for myself. With the little money I had accumulated, and the addition of a few dollars from my dear mother, I started westward, and my first halting place was Chicago. While sauntering along the streets of that great city, undecided which way to turn, or where to find employment, I met an old schoolmate, one that had been very dear to me throughout my boyhood. It did not require much persuasion to have me accompany him home, where I was kindly received and made welcome by his parents.

He had been for two years engaged in the telegraph office, and had become quite proficient in the language of the wires. I went with him to the office on the following morning, and by his kindness and intercession I obtained a situation as messenger. For two years I tramped the busy streets of that great city, conveying messages of joy or sorrow, of pleasure or pain, of life or death; seeking the recipients in the garrets of poverty, the cellars of iniquity, in the countingroom of the merchant, and in the mansions of the great.

I soon became acquainted with the workings of the office, and in a little while I could read the click of an operator's key as though it spoke "my mother tongue." At last I was engaged as an operator, and served in that capacity during the first three years of the war, and afterward entered the army.

At the close of the war I decided to see as much of this world as I could before settling down in life. For this purpose I purchased a noble horse, and in company with many others started for the Pacific shores.

Nothing worthy of note occurred until we arrived in the vicinity of the Humboldt River, in Nevada Territory.

While engaged in shooting sage hens I became detached from my party, and, darkness coming on, I dismounted, intending to camp for the night near a small stream. While engaged in preparing a fire with some dry brush I discovered smoke curling up above the tall trees that belted the stream. I remounted my horse and rode on, in hopes of finding my companions, but as I drew near I was surprised to find a well-built log hut. I stopped to reconnoiter, and after deciding to proceed, my horse refused to move in that direction. This aroused my fears in a slight degree, but curiosity led me on. A deep thrust with my spurs sent Hero on with a lively pace, and in a moment more we were in front of the house.

Dismounting, I approached the door and hesitatingly rapped. I hesitated because voices were busily engaged

in some altercation, but on rapping the quarrel ceased. The door suddenly opened, and a tall, lean, lank, blue-nosed, gray-haired man stepped out.

"Stranger," said I patronizingly, "can you give me accommodations for the night?"

"Yes, for money," squalled the man.

"I have plenty of money," I unguardedly said; then, thinking of the dangers of a well-filled purse, continued:

"I have plenty of money for one night's lodging."

At this moment half a dozen ill-favored wretches poked their long-haired heads out of the door and viewed me with the air of a recruiting sergeant, and notwithstanding that I had been through the war the crowd before me was the hardest set of scallawags I ever saw. I knew that it would not do to let them see that I was intimidated, so I stepped up to them as familiarly as I could under the circumstances, and extending my hand, said:

"Boys, it makes me happy to see a white man after fighting the Indians so long. How are you?"

They came tumbling out of the door, and suddenly became very familiar. Two or three started for my horse, but Hero showed no sign of dislike. I relieved him of his saddle and bridle, patted him on his back, and turned him loose. I then entered the house, and my suspicions of the horde that occupied it were fully confirmed. On the side opposite the door were two long bunks or shelves well supplied with buffalo robes. In the center of the room was a long, roughly hewed log table, and around the room great bundles of furs, with here and there a hide. All plainly showed that the ostensible occupation of the gang was hunting and trapping.

"Whar do you hold out, stranger, when you are to hum?" asked the first I have described.

"In Illinois."

"Illinoy. Let us see—that am a Norther State, ain't it?" squealed the old man.

"It am," I replied, unable to restrain my mimic powers.

"What trail do you foller?" inquired the old man, gazing very intently under his long, gray eyelashes.

"I am a telegraph operator, if you desire to know my profession," was my reply.

"An operator?" eagerly inquired one whom the gang called Ned.

"Yes."

At this juncture the old man invited us up to eat, and the gang assembled around the log table. The old man, with a long knife, divided a huge piece of buffalo meat, and distributed it with some hard-tack, to the gang, who

—our eyes met; there was something in the expression of his that seemed to say, "I am your friend." I moved my finger as though I was working an operator's key, and slowly spelled out, "Are you my friend?" He immediately answered, "Yes—beware—watch me." I did watch him.

The gang arose and passed out, and soon no one remained but the old man, Ned, and myself. While the old man was busy Ned resumed the conversation by sound.

"Where are you from, and what is your name?" inquired the clicks on Ned's cup.

I clicked out in return:

"From Chicago, George——"

"Great heavens! do you not know me, George?" spoke the cup. "I am Henry, the one that obtained for you a situation in Chicago.

"Is it possible? How came you here?" I asked, with my fingers.

"I went into the army the same time you did, deserted with a number, and with our horses started to California. We lost our way, our horses died, and not having the means of traveling, we located with this old trapper. Since I have been here my comrades have turned into a band of cutthroats. You are in dangtr. Your horse is worth more than a dozen human lives. Follow my advice, and you are safe."

"I will."

"My comrades are suspicious of me. I have tried to escape three times, and they have overtaken me and dragged me back, fearing that I would make known their whereabouts. Your party cannot be far from here. As soon as the men come back say that you wish to see to your horse before you retire. Go out, mount him, travel the back path. The moon is now coming up, and you will be able to see your road. Keep out of the forest on the right, and ascend the hill on the left, about two miles distant. In the morning, if your party are on this side of the river, you can see them if they are within ten miles. If you find them, bring them here, and let me escape from these murderers."

This Ned clicked out on his cup, and with motions of his fingers as rapidly as though he was talking.

Soon the men returned, and when the last one entered I asked if they had seen my horse, and the reply was that he was not at the door.

"I will see if he is safe before I turn in, as I wish to start early in the morning."

They all volunteered to accompany me, but I positively refused to permit them. On arriving outside I

outside, while ten others entered, with revolvers ready for any emergency. The gang were all in their bunks, and each one of my comrades chose his man, who was warned not to move hand or foot on pain of death.

I pointed to my friend, who was directed to come from his bunk and go outside. One by one the gang were ordered from their bunks, and bound to the floor with strips of buffalo hide. Our party remounted their horses, and my preserver, who had become an experienced guide by his long residence in the country, led us to the El Dorado State.

SLEEPING CARS OF THE DESERT.

Camel cradles are not designed for rocking young camels to sleep, but they are a contrivance by which travelers in the desert may journey by night and yet not lose all sleep. Mr. Lansdell, in his recent book of travels, describes them in an entertaining way, in telling how he journeyed by camel train from Khiva to the Caspian:

"About seven o'clock all was in readiness, and we were to get into our queer sleeping cages. Let the reader imagine two narrow wooden crates, such as earthenware is packed in, each sufficiently large for a man to lie in when twisted to the shape of the letter S, and let him further imagine them suspended on either side of the huge hump of a kneeling camel.

"This, I am given to understand, is to be my sleeping place for the night, and I accordingly choose my berth on the port side of the 'ship of the desert,' first putting into the cradle for a lining a piece of felt and then two pillows. Then I put on, over my ordinary suit, my jackal-lined coat, enveloping me from head to foot, over that my duster, and on my head a sheepskin hat, to say nothing of the fur-lined boots, and then, getting into the cradle, I cover my feet with my sheepskin rug.

"And now comes the tug of war. Nazar asks are we ready, bids us hold on, and says to the camel, 'Chu,' whereupon the animal gets up leisurely, first by his hind legs, and in so doing raises our feet to the angle of 60 degrees, thereby threatening to pitch us out bodily.

"We hold on, however, for dear life, and then comes a lurch from the fore, lifting our heads once more to the horizontal. The fear of danger is now past, but it is not easy at first to get accustomed to the strange motion caused by the long strides of the camel.

"When the creature was urged to go quickly, the nearest simile for the cradle I can think of is that of a bottle of medicine in the process of being 'well shaken before taken'; but when the camel walked leisurely, then one lies as in a boat idly tossed by the billows, and sleep became possible, just as it is in a Russian tarantass, when one is dead tired, cramped, and 'used to it.'"

THE KESTREL BIRD.

The kestrel is a beautiful bird of the hawk kind, known also as the stannel hawk and windhover. The male is about fourteen inches in length, and in breadth two feet three inches. Its colors at first sight distinguish it from all other hawks. The crown of the head, and the greater part of the tail, are of a fine light gray hue, and on the lower part of the latter there is a broad black bar, succeeded by white tips. The back and coverts of the wings are bright cinnamon brown, spotted with black; quill feathers dusky, with light edges; inside of the wings white, beautifully spotted with brown on the under coverts, and barred on all the quills with pale ash. The whole underside of the bird is of a pale rust color, streaked and spotted with black. The bill is blue. The colors of the female are less vivid than those of the male. The back and wing coverts are rusty brown, and elegantly marked with numerous undulated bars of black. The breast, belly, and thighs are of a pale reddish buff, with dusky streaks pointing downward; and the tail is marked by a pretty, broad, ash-colored bar near the end. When in quest of food, it glides softly through the air, at a moderate height, now poised in the breeze on fluttering pinion, now resting in the void, apparently without motion, till at last down he comes, like a falling stone, upon the unconscious prey below.

HOW DYNAMITE IS MANUFACTURED.

Dynamite is produced by the admixture of nitroglycerin with a silicious infusorial earth, known under the German name as *kieselguhr*, and in appearance looks like brown sugar. The various processes are carried on in isolated wooden buildings, about twenty yards from each other, and surrounded by massive banks of earth. Nitric and sulphuric acids having been mixed, the temperature being maintained as low as possible by cold water and compressed air, the acids are run into a large leaden tank and further cooled, when glycerin is injected by means of compressed air. This process, being one of considerable danger, has to be closely watched. The nitroglycerin now formed is drawn off and washed in an alkaline solution to remove any acidity, and is then incorporated with the *kieselguhr* in the proportion of 1 to 3. Cartridges, about one inch to seven-eighths inch diameter by three and a half inches long, are then made up, wrapped in vegetable parchment, and packed in boxes covered with waterproof oil paper, with instructions and cautions on them in different languages. Government regulations, both as to the storage and transport of dynamite, are stringent and restrictive.

CAP OF LIBERTY.

The term "cap of liberty" is more generally applied to the cap used during the French Revolutionary reign. It consisted of a red cap (taken from those worn by the liberated slaves of Marseilles), and was first used in the great revolution of 1789. The Jacobin Club afterward made the red cap a badge of membership, and it was then called the "Jacobin cap." The right of covering the head was always esteemed the symbol of liberty; and the first act of slaves, when they were set free, used to be the setting of a cap on the head, as during their slavery they always went bareheaded. The cap thus became symbolical of their restoration to freedom. This simple sign of liberty has played an active part in other revolutions than the French. Gessler's order to salute his hat was the cause of the Swiss outbreak, and the subsequent recovery of the liberty of Switzerland. The arms of the Swiss cantons are expressive of this fact, as they have a round hat for a crest. In England a blue cap with a white border, on which is the inscription, "Liberty," in golden letters, forms the symbol of the constitutional liberty of the nation; and Britannia is sometimes represented as holding this upon the point of her spear.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Elephant Swallows One Hundred Dollars in Currency.

Bank notes to the value of $100, belonging to a visitor, have been eaten by a menagerie elephant at Usk, England.

While feeding the elephant with biscuits, Mr. Savery, of the Nag Head Hotel, placed a biscuit in the side pocket of his coat, in which was also a letter containing $100 in notes.

The elephant, in his search, put the tip of his trunk in the pocket and took out both biscuit and letter, and, transferring them to his mouth, swallowed the lot.

Cross Back in Game.

Monte Cross, the veteran shortstop, has returned to baseball this season with an endeavor to gain success in an independent league in Philadelphia. Monte, who has been in the scrap-iron business since his retirement from the professional diamond, asserts that his team will be the strongest independent aggregation ever produced in the Quaker City. He will name them the Scrap Irons.

Judge Forgets When Insult Comes Home.

The most deadly insult one can offer to a French policeman is to say to him, "Death to the cows!"

A few days ago, in the Rennes, France, appeal court, Monsieur de Savignon Larombiere, the judge, explained to a policeman that a cow was "a noble and beautiful animal," and therefore its name could not be considered a term of opprobrium. Later, a vagabond, who came up on appeal before Monsieur de Savignon Larombiere, had his original term of imprisonment doubled. On hearing the sentence, the prisoner called the judge an "old cow."

Immediately the judge, forgetting his philosophic defense of a few days before, ordered the vagabond's term of imprisonment to be further increased by five years for insulting him.

Promises a New Era in Ship Propulsion.

The first electrically propelled seagoing vessel, the *Tynemouth*, was launched on March 27 at Middlesbrough, Yorkshire, England.

Two Diesel oil engines generate the electricity which drives the propeller. The vessel is of 2,400 tons dead weight, 250 feet long, 42½ feet broad, and 19 feet deep. It promises a new epoch in ship propulsion.

Will Not Try to Break His Record.

Clyde Milan, champion base runner of the American League last season, has no ambition to equal or excel the mark he set in the last campaign.

Milan does not believe that it would be just to his team to have such an ambition, for to run bases for the sole purpose of establishing a record might prove detrimental to the best interests of his team.

"I hope to steal a lot of bases, but I am not going to try for a record," said he. "If it made no difference whether we won or lost, I would be able to take a lot of chances, and, of course, roll up a great base-stealing record. That might be pleasant for me, but I want to play the game to win, and you can't do that by running wild. I shall certainly take advantage of every opening to steal a base if conditions justify me so doing, but I hope to be of more benefit to my team by leading the opposing team to believe that I want to steal when I really do not.

"Do you know that my base stealing was of much help to the team last season? I don't mean to be egotistical, but when you have a pitcher giving a lot of his attention to watching me on first he has his mind off the batsman, and many a batting rally has been started by those who followed me in the batting order just because the pitcher got himself in a hole watching me, and then had to lay a straight one over for the batter.

"There is a lot of fun in running bases, though let me tell you it is hard work. I have to take many a hard bump on the ground, and frequently tear the skin off my hips and legs in sliding, but there is real excitement in it, and I enjoy it. Speed, of course, helps a fellow a lot, but no matter how fast a fellow may be he cannot steal on any catcher unless he can get a start on the pitcher, and then has an elusive slide to avoid the baseman, who frequently has the ball waiting for him.

"I study every pitcher that works against us. They all do something just before they pitch, and if I can detect that I manage to get a good start off the bag, and, of course, manage to steal. I don't expect to stand tied on the bases this year, but I am not starting out with the intention of breaking any records."

Naval Officer Runs Opium Den.

A French naval lieutenant at Brest, France, has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined $200 for conducting an opium-smoking den for use by officers and women.

A man named Lardenors was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined $600 for supplying opium to two women who kept opium dens. The women were also sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined $20 and $100, respectively.

Hunt for Treasure.

Using as a guide an ancient document said to have come from the national archives of Mexico and declared to contain the secret of the hiding place of several millions in gold, silver, and jewelry thrown into a box and buried by Santa Anna's soldiers on their hurried flight from the sanguinary defeat of San Jacinto, a party, directed by the two Mexicans who say they have the document, began to dig on the land owned by El Roos, in Summit Place, San Antonio, Texas.

The paper—jealously guarded—is said to contain a diagram giving minute directions how to go about finding the 4x6-foot box which is said to contain the wealth. Mention is said to be made of a gigantic live-oak tree, the largest in this country, and it is asserted that the resting place of the treasure is adjacent to this tree.

In 1836, according to legend said to be substantiated by the curious document in possession of the two Mexicans, several thousand Mexican soldiers, following the defeat and capture of Santa Anna, started overland for Mexico.

They halted several miles from San Antonio and, fearful that they would encounter here another armed force of Texans, decided to throw together all their money and valuables and bury the box. Just how much the total amounted to is lost to memory, but it is said to have been several millions.

A record of the transaction, together with a map of the vicinity and a minute description of the hiding place, is said to have been made and carried back to the City of Mexico with the returning Mexicans. The record is believed to have been placed in the archives of the country, and is said to be the one now in possession of the two who came to excavate according to directions.

It is current among the Mexicans, who have worked at clearing the acreage on which the treasure is said to be buried, that the spot is haunted. They say at nights they heard strange noises similar to the tramp of armed men, and that the jangle of spurs and war accouterment disturbed their slumbers. So forcefully did this idea take possession of the laborers that none would spend the night on the grounds, although tents had been furnished them for accommodation. They said they feared some of the vague shapes they asserted they saw floating over the ground.

As long as three years since, Mexicans from the City of Mexico have sought to get permission to dig for the treasure. It has been refused, with the result that several attempts have been made to dig during the night hours. These first Mexicans are said to have had a rough draft of the original document that is asserted to be in possession of the two who have made an agreement with Mr. Roos to explore the vicinity. Excavations are under way, with a deputy sheriff on guard, who will keep intruders off the property.

Hen Sticks to Burning Nest.

Notwithstanding the fact that a roaring fire was consuming the cabin kitchen in which she was placed, a setting hen, at Frederick, Md., refused to leave her eggs, and perished in the flames.

The hen shared the room with two old colored women, who were bedridden at the time. It was with difficulty that the women were rescued from the burning cabin.

Foils Sleuth, and Escapes.

A woman known to the Burns Detective Agency as Mrs. H. V. Purcell, and wanted in Elmira, New York, eluded the Burns men recently, after they had followed her for several months through seven States and finally located her in the Allaire Apartments, in New York.

The ruse the woman adopted was as simple as it was effective. She simply telephoned to police headquarters that a burglar was trying to get into her apartment, and Policeman Flynn, of the West Seventeenth Street Station, hurried into the apartment house and grabbed Charles F. Kirchner, a Burns operative, whom he found waiting in the hall, where he had been on guard lest Mrs. Purcell escape before requisition papers came for her from Elmira.

Despite Kirchner's protest, the policeman led him to Mrs. Purcell's door, and there the woman looked at him and exclaimed:

"That's the man, officer! He tried to break into the house."

Kirchner tried to get Flynn to arrest Mrs. Purcell, but Flynn refused, and took Kirchner to the station, telling the woman to appear against him in the Jefferson Market Court.

At the station, Kirchner got his office on the telephone, and Assistant Superintendent Walter Parker took a taxicab to the Allaire Apartments. Mrs. Purcell had flown.

In court, Parker told Magistrate Freschi the story of the search through seven States. It was clear that Kirchner had been foiled by a ruse, and the Magistrate discharged him, though Mrs. Adele Mandre said he had annoyed her in the hall of the apartment house.

Parker angrily exclaimed that she had aided in cheating justice, and Mrs. Madre, to the surprise of the court, clapped her hands vigorously and retorted:

"You got stung, and you're sore!"

Ship's Pigs Serve as Barometer.

Pigs thrive nicely on long ocean voyages if condition of the two porkers brought to Boston recently on the Norwegian sailing ship *Marita* may be taken as evidence. Captain Koldercup speaks well of pigs, generally, and does not object to having them about deck, for pigs seldom get under foot and may be counted on to skurry for shelter when the sea gets uncomfortably rough.

The *Marita's* pigs, moreover, serve the purpose of barometers, says officers who ought to know by observation. When a disturbance is coming the tails of the pigs, usually kinky, straighten out, and their ears droop. With barometer reading between 29.90 and 30 the tails begin to forecast approach of a trough of low pressure. When the reading gets below 29.50 the pigs seek cover and the storm is pretty certain to burst within five hours. But a high barometer puts a beautiful twist in the tails and the ears stand jauntily stiff and with a trifle of a cant forward. The *Marita's* navigators only have to watch the pigs to foretell what's about to happen, and, should the ship's barometer meet with accident, the brace of porkers might fill the place of the instrument admirably.

Band Plays at Prison Meals.

In recent years none of the world's great prisons has attracted more attention than the Federal prison at Atlanta, interest in the institution being due in large measure to its revolutionary methods of dealing with offenders.

More than 900 men are serving sentences there at the present time, the list including murderers, bank wreckers, counterfeiters, burglars, and men who have used the mails to defraud their victims. They are sentenced there from all parts of the country, and many of them are desperate, but no matter how serious their offenses, they are given the chance to show they are still worthy of some consideration. If a man doesn't leave the prison with better feeling toward the world, it is his own fault and not the fault of William H. Moyer, the big-hearted, brainy warden, or his capable assistants.

Liberty is about the only thing denied the inmates of the prison. Comfort, cleanliness, entertainment, physical exercise, well-cooked food and plenty of it, tobacco, and good reading are some of the compensations that fall to the lot of the man who is deprived of his freedom.

After the first shock of separation from family and friends wears off most of the prisoners begin to appreciate what is being done for them, and they coöperate with the prison officials in the most hearty manner. If they are old offenders, men who have served terms in other penal

institutions, they lose no time in announcing their intention to behave, the recollection of other prisons making them appreciate the humane system in vogue at Atlanta.

Visitors leave the institution marveling at the perfect sanitation of the big plant. Every part of the prison is kept in spotless condition, floors, walks, windows, corridors, and furniture reflecting the vast amount of labor bestowed upon them.

The kitchen, where the meals of this small army are prepared, is a model of cleanliness, its spick-and-span appearance winning unstinted praise from sightseers. The cooks and kitchen help wear white coats and caps during the preparation of a meal.

The long tables have been abolished in the dining room, and the men now take their meals from tables that will accommodate from eight to ten persons. The prison orchestra, a splendid organization, plays during the lunch hour, and the men discuss the topics of the day much after the fashion of men at a club.

Every effort is made to make the men contented, the inmates being allowed to work at callings to which they are accustomed, as far as is possible.

The hated stripes have given way to uniforms of blue-gray, the silence rule and lockstep have been thrown into the discard, and the men are not compelled to avert their faces at the approach of visitors, as is the case in most prisons.

Because of the rigid health rules the men leave there in splendid physical condition. They are compelled to bathe and change their clothing regularly and to take a certain amount of exercise in the open every day.

With few exceptions, the men are careful about their personal appearance, and are quick to report violations of this rule on the part of others. They have the privilege of brushing up before every meal. Twice a week they go through the strenuous "setting-up exercise" in vogue in the army for many years.

Time Clock for St. Louis Browns.

A time clock has been installed at Sportsman's Park, St. Louis, with the joint approval, and, in fact, under the joint direction of President Hedges and Manager Stovall, of the St. Louis Browns. Every player, be he veteran or recruit, will have to record his arrival every morning for the forenoon practice, and men who do not get into the grounds and by the time clock before 1 o'clock, will be fined in proportion to their tardiness. One-eighth of a day's pay is the rate for every 15 minutes' tardiness. Needless to say, some of the players rather object to this detective device, but President Hedges declares his players can kick their heads off if they wish to—but that the clock game will go despite one and all protests.

Men Fight Their Duel With Ancient Cannon.

Here is the story of a Central American duel, told by one of the survivors, who had just arrived at New York from Honduras. The hero is Homer R. Wilson, of Montgomery, Ala.

The duel was fought in Jatigalpa. A native insulted the man from Montgomery and was punched by him. Thereupon the native challenged the Montgomery man, who accepted and named cannon.

The next day at sunrise, on a hill near the city, Wilson says he was surprised to find all in readiness for the duel. Two cannon facing each other, loaded to the muzzle with scrap iron, had been provided. They were old-time brass cannon, such as were in use in America before the Revolutionary War.

"At a signal," said Wilson, "we applied the torches to the cannon. The field piece in use by my opponent was the first to go off. As I fell I heard my cannon roar. He fared as badly as I did. I have come to have the iron taken out of my body."

Coughs Up Money Stolen in Hotel.

Arrested on a charge of stealing $27 in a hotel, William Frazer confirmed the suspicions of the Yonkers, N. Y., police by choking and finally coughing up two bank notes. When arraigned before Judge Beall, Frazer said he mistook the bills for chewing tobacco. He was found guilty of larceny.

Tells of Queer Pygmy People.

One of the queerest regions under the sun—a land peopled by pygmies whose womankind are shocked at the sight of men wearing clothes—has just been explored by a British officer. He is Captain G. G. Rawling, who set out as an agent of the British Ornithological Society to explore the parts of Dutch New Guinea which lie in the neighborhood of the Snow Mountains, and was rewarded by the discovery of a hitherto unknown race of human midgets.

Of the pygmies of Tapiro Mountain, their discoverer can tell us comparatively little, however, for these tiny people, whose average height is 4 feet 8 inches, who can count only up to ten, and whose favorite weapon, both for purposes of wife-beating and defense against their enemies, is a wooden club with a stone head, proved exceptionally coy, and refused to be "studied" to any extent. Not so much as a sight of their women did Captain Rawling and his companions get, despite the fact that they offered a dazzling inducement in the shape of "large butcher knives" in exchange for an introduction to the women of the Tapiro country.

The old men of the tribe, it seems, stood in the way, though the young ones were inclined to yield to the explorers' temptation. "In fact," writes Rawling, "they actually said that several of the women had approached, and from the screen of the jungle had taken a surreptitious look at us, but that the sight of our clothing had been too much for their feelings, and that they had beaten a precipitate flight. 'If we would only remove our clothes and appear unclothed, like them,' they explained, 'there would be little doubt that the women could be persuaded to return.'"

Evidently the Tapiro women look upon clothing as immodest. These pygmies are not cannibals, but a near-by tribe visited by Rawling and his companions are, and vigorously defended their "diet" from a health standpoint.

"In their case," says the explorer, "this custom is not without a touch of unconscious humor, the members saying that human flesh is preferable to that of pig, as, no matter what quantity is eaten, the former never induces indigestion."

These cannibalistic Papuans refrained from butchering any human beings—unless they did so on the quiet—while Rawling and his party were in their village, but they entertained the Englishmen with a pig-killing festival which must have been an extraordinary spectacle. The pigs slain numbered two, and previous to the orgy accompanying their

deaths, in which the entire village took part, were penned up in a native hut.

"The men," says Rawling, "armed with large rattan nooses, placed themselves on either side of the hut within which the pigs were confined, and at a given signal the animals were driven forth, successfully overpowered and trussed, their snouts tightly bound and chalk thrown into their faces and eyes. With a man seated astride each animal, and to the accompaniment of loud wails from the women, they were lifted shoulder high, carried to the place of slaughter, and lashed to the platform.

"The executioners with their clubs took up position, while the audience, numbering some 200, crowded closely around, and, as the rain of blows fell, drowned the squeals of the victims by yells and the beating of drums. Death must have been instantaneous, but the beating continued until the carcasses had ceased to quiver, when for quite five minutes the entire audience gave itself up to unrestrained wailing and gnashing of teeth; the women hugging and clasping the carcasses in their unnatural grief, while the air rang with shrieks, and tears coursed down every cheek."

Of the land through which he journeyed to reach the pygmies' country the explorer draws anything but a pleasant picture. It seems to be composed about equally of swamps and almost impenetrable jungles—"sago swamps and mangrove swamps, near which sickening clouds of blue bottles and mosquitoes swarm, and leeches drop on one from the trees."

Blackfeet Are Starving.

A delegation of Blackfeet Indians, headed by Chief John White Calf, appealed to Secretary Lane recently for rations for the Blackfeet, who, he was told, were starving on their reservation near Browning, Mont.

The secretary telegraphed his agent there for an immediate report, and told the Indians he would extend such relief as he could.

Fifty Thousand Dollars for Flight Across Atlantic.

Lord Northcliffe, in the London *Daily Mail*, offers a prize of $50,000 to the first person making a transatlantic flight in a hydroaëroplane in seventy-two consecutive hours between any point in the United States, Canada, or Newfoundland, and any point in Great Britain or Ireland, in either direction. The contest is open to all nationalities.

In connection with the offer, the *Mail* prints an interview with Count de Lambert, who says that within ten years the Atlantic will be crossed by hydroaëroplanes between sunrise and sunset of a summer's day. He is the inventor of the hydroaëroplane, and a pupil of Wilbur Wright.

When he was asked what were the chief difficulties of a transatlantic flight, Count de Lambert said:

"The two great difficulties will be to keep one's course, if one is out of sight of ships and the wind changes, and to avoid being smashed up by waves when one alights to replenish his petrol. The trouble with the wind is that you may keep on your course by the compass and yet all the while, without knowing it, may be drifting. It is absolutely necessary that the machine be able to float for a week, say, in case the engines fail. As things are to-day, no machine can get across without stopping en route for fuel.

"Take a machine weighing a ton, everything included. Suppose the whole distance across to be 2,000 miles, and the machine to fly at a moderate speed, 62 miles an hour. To drive the machine 90 feet a second means an effective thrust of 440 pounds, or 66 horse power. To obtain this a motor of 120 horse power is required, consuming 110 pounds of petrol an hour. Thus, in order to do the distance in thirty-two hours, a one-ton machine would have to start with one and a half tons of fuel, which is absurd.

"Hence, before we can fly across without stopping we must find a better fuel than petrol, or a more efficient motor, or a machine which requires less than a 440-pound thrust; and no doubt we shall succeed. Meanwhile I consider the scheme of flying across with stoppages to replenish perfectly practicable. It is merely a question of luck and having two days' calm weather. A slight following wind would make a great difference.

"One would use, I suppose, two engines, or perhaps an engine of which half could be in use at a time, as is sometimes done with a fourteen-cylinder Gnome. It will be easy to arrange for the man who is not driving to lie down and rest. The hydroaëroplane is the machine of the future for crossing water."

The *Mail* also offers a prize of $25,000 for the first person piloting a hydroaëroplane of British invention and construction around England, Scotland, and Wales in seventy-two hours.

Saved Thirty Thousand Dollars at Washtub.

Mrs. Matilda Wynn, a negro woman, formerly residing in Glen Cove, L. I., made and saved $30,000 by work as a washerwoman, it became known when her husband, John Wynn, received a favorable decision in the contest he instituted to prevent the probate of her will.

Mrs. Wynn's first husband was Henry Hopkins, who died years ago. During her widowhood she took in washing for Glen Cove families. She executed a will several years ago, leaving her estate, valued at $10,000 in real estate and $20,000 in personal property, to nephews and nieces. Then she married Wynn, twenty years her junior. She died last February, and Wynn objected to the will. Surrogate Graham decided that her marriage invalidated the will, and Wynn gets the entire estate.

Recent Facts You May Not Know.

St. Paul, Minn., holds the record for the highest recorded wind velocity, while there are several points where the average is greater than that of Chicago, which is known as the Windy City.

During the last year there was added to the railroads of this country less than 3,000 miles of new line, which is away below the average.

The proportion of females to the thousand males in 1907 was: Great Britain, 1,052; France, 1,033; Germany, 1,032, and the United States, 959.

An Ohio manufacturing plan converts the waste water from its drop forges into electrical power.

It has taken a Nebraska farmer to discover that hogs will thrive and grow fat on parsley.

Match marks can be removed from paint by rubbing with a cut lemon, then with whiting, and then washing with soap and water.

The lard used in the United States in a year would fill a pail 295 feet in diameter and 334 feet deep.

An English capitalist has been in the Philippines in quest of 25,000 or 30,000 acres for a coconut plantation,

but as so large a tract was difficult to obtain, he is reported to have got 5,000 acres on the Island of Lapac.

Receiving the power from a gasoline engine, a machine invented by a California man draws grasshoppers into a cage by suction as it is driven through his vineyard.

New York's fire prevention bureau last year sent forty firebugs to prison for long terms.

Two appendices were removed from R. A. Spangenberg, of Scranton, Pa., who now is recovering at his home. The case is said to be unprecedented.

Saved from Bullet by Glass Eye.

Job Owen, of Shamokin, Pa., was saved from probable death by his artificial eye. It prevented a rifle bullet from entering his brain. The shot was fired by an unknown person. A doctor found that the bullet had driven the eye farther into the socket, causing only laceration. It felt like a sledge-hammer blow on the head, Owen said.

Police Use Sabers.

"Don't think this is Vienna!" cried a crowd of people gathered in front of the Servian Legation, in St. Petersburg, Russia, recently, to listen to a speech by the Servian minister to Russia. The people's protest was raised in this way against the action of the Russian police, who ruthlessly rode them down, slashing right and left with their sabers.

The Russian government apparently had foreseen the dimensions which would be assumed by the popular demonstration over the victories gained by the armies of the Balkan allies in Turkey and had issued rigorous orders to suppress any outburst of feeling which exceeded the limit of official sympathy.

Anti-Austrian feeling was very keen among the demonstrators, who attempted to reach the Austro-Hungarian embassy.

The Bulgarian minister to Russia, in a short speech, aroused wild enthusiasm by declaring that the Bulgarian success was a victory for the whole of the Slav race.

These Tramps Must Work to Eat.

Bement, a small town southwest of Bloomington, Ill., believes that it has solved the tramp problem. Tickets have been distributed to every place of business and residence in the city, which will be good for a meal at any restaurant when countersigned by the street commissioner. When tramps make their appearance at any business house or residence, begging for something to eat or wear, they are given one of these cards and directed to the street commissioner. The latter puts the applicant to work upon the streets and gives him meals sufficient to cover the amount of work performed.

Newspaper Men in School.

Six months of the Pulitzer School of Journalism have demonstrated the wisdom of opening the doors of the school to men already in newspaper work, even though they might be lacking in Latin and Greek or some other of the usual college preparatory courses, said Doctor Talcott Williams, dean of the school, recently.

"There was at first a grave doubt about admitting these applicants," said Doctor Williams. "But Mr. Pulitzer in making his gift had required that the school be open to men already in newspaper work, and there he showed a wisdom beyond some of our theories of education.

"On the whole the men who have come in from journalism have done better than the others. They had their troubles, wrestling with French verbs and in such labors, but in economics and history and government they stood higher.

"This experience in the school is proof to my mind that the formidable fence of examinations put up around a liberal education needs to be modified. In many colleges such men can come in as special students, but they cannot get a degree. I look forward to the school of journalism making our colleges consider this problem and modify their examination systems.

"Seven men were assigned to the Becker trial, and on the night the trial was ended they went to Columbia University at twelve-thirty in the morning and stayed up until three-thirty writing their stories. Greater New York is our laboratory. Each man does his trick of a week or two at police headquarters.

"I stipulated when the plans for the school's building were being drawn that it should be so arranged that it might be open every night until one o'clock," said Director Williams. "I hope the time will come when it is in use night and day."

Boy Scouts Fly Fighting.

The Boy Scouts of America, 300,000 strong, have been ordered to take the field against the pestiferous house fly in the weekly gazette of the organization issued from the national headquarters in the Fifth Avenue Building, New York. "Prevent the Fly!" will be one of the slogans of the Boy Scouts from this time forward until the summer is over. A plan has been worked out by George H. Merritt, publication secretary of the organization, under the supervision of James E. West, chief scout executive, whereby the boys will coöperate with the boards of health of towns and cities throughout the country in a campaign to prevent, destroy, and root out utterly the winged buzzers who have for centuries been the small boy's rival in inroads upon the domestic jam.

Cards bearing the motto "Prevent the Fly" will be sent by thousands to boys throughout the country, giving not only the life history of flies and pictures of the damage they do, but also specific instructions as to how they may most effectively be destroyed. First the Boy Scouts are instructed to "swat the fly," killing off the old ones that have lived through the winter or are the first brood of spring, and which cannot escape as well as the spry ones. Secondly the boys will go scouting for the breeding places of flies, such as stables, garbage cans, and the like; and by cleaning up those places they will do their share in eradicating the national pest. The boys are also urged to get the owners of the stables, stys, and other breeding places of flies to sign a contract to keep the places thereafter clean. In the third place the boys are instructed, in case the owners refuse or fail to do so, to notify the proper city authorities.

The plan is to divide each town or city into districts and to assign a troop of Scouts to each section.

Wins Honors, Though Blind.

Totally blind, and battling in the darkness for an education, Harold de V. Howard, a lad of 18 years, the one sightless student at the University of Pennsylvania, has conquered illness brought on by his fight against overwhelming odds and has returned to attempt again to win

his university degree from the Wharton School. Several weeks ago his health broke down under the strain of competition with students who possessed all their faculties. He was forced to put away his notebook, filled with the perforations symbolizing to him the words of his professors, pin pricked in classes where men who see have difficulty in penciling their notes, and read by his sensitive finger tips.

Howard would not resign himself to an annihilation of his ambitions. He strove for health with the same perseverance that has characterized his fight for learning since the day when he became a student at the Overbrook School for the Blind. To-day he is by no means well, but he has sufficiently regained his health to attempt his university struggle once more.

In entering the course in business law at the university last autumn, Howard was warned that the road ahead of him was a hard road to travel in pursuit of knowledge. Braile books, with their raised letters, Howard had none, for the University of Pennsylvania makes no provision for the blind. Howard solved this first problem by securing a man to read to him. His remarkably trained mind was capable of grasping and retaining the read word with an ease difficult for those who, in visualization, are compelled to "grind" the material upon which the dreaded examinations are based.

The problem of lecture notes that confronted him was more difficult of solution. The hurried words expressing the intricate thoughts of the professors eluded him. Here he found that he was unable to rely upon his memory. Determined to overcome this handicap, he evolved a pin-prick system of note taking read by his fingers.

At first the faculty of the Wharton School were averse to Howard's matriculation. Only his exceptional scholastic record at the Overbrook School for the Blind and his development of his note-taking system turned the skepticism of his professor to admiration.

The young man's mentality, it is said at the university, is as remarkable as his perseverance. Despite his handicaps, his standing is on a par with that of the brightest of those who have their sight.

Nearly Doubles in Decade.

The great southern metropolis of Buenos Aires has been growing in population with marvelous rapidity, surpassing in that respect every other city in the world except Chicago, according to census statistics just received by the state department.

January 31 last the city had a population of 1,434,830. In 1869 the population was 177,767, and 10 years ago it was 783,220, so that the city has nearly doubled in a decade.

Canada Plans Parcel Post.

A parcel post, planned on the zone system similar to that in the United States, is proposed for Canada. Postmaster General Pelletier has announced that he would introduce shortly the necessary legislation. The Canadian post-office department has handled great quantities of incoming parcel-post matter since January 1 without receiving any benefit in return.

Had a Wallop All His Own.

Kid Andrews and Young Sharkey, two Buffalo lightweights, who are rivals personally as well as professionally, met on the street the other day and engaged in open combat in which Sharkey was put to sleep. Andrews was arrested, and in the charge it was alleged that Sharkey was hit on the head with a stone. When called before a judge to testify, Andrews strode majestically to the bench, and, clenching his right fist, addressed his honor thusly:

"I deny he was hit with a stone, jedge; I hit him with that trusty right and he went to sleep."

"All right," said the judge, "you can go to jail for ninety days, and when you come out you will be a welterweight."

The judge had a particular brand of wallop which is all his own.

President Will Confer With Reporters.

Convinced that public business would be expedited by the practice, President Wilson has decided to set aside two hours each week for "heart-to-heart" talks with the newspaper correspondents. One hour will be devoted to the writers each Tuesday morning and another hour Thursday afternoons.

The president will discuss administration policies and sketch his official programs, much of the matter discussed necessarily being in confidence and solely for the guidance of the writers.

Antarctic Expeditions.

Rear Admiral Robert F. Peary, speaking before the International Geographical Congress, at Rome, Italy, urged that three antarctic expeditions be undertaken—one directly to the south pole, a second around the pole, and a third to cross it.

He expressed the hope that the United States would initiate these expeditions, or that some other country could do so, as the polar regions afforded room for the activities of all nations.

Admiral Peary said he would give his support and experience in the carrying out of such expeditions, but would not personally participate as, in his opinion, they needed younger men.

Expert Cowboys Lived in 2800 B. C.

Professor L. Earle Rowe, of the Rhode Island School of Design, who returned to his home, at Providence, R. I., recently, from Egypt, where he assisted Doctor Reisner in his explorations, declares that Professor L. Percival Lowell, of Flagstaff, Ariz., must be in error when he states that the pyramids were built by the Chaldeans as temples to the gods.

Professor Rowe alluded to an incident of the expedition which, he says, proves that the Egyptians wore hobble skirts as far back as 2800 B. C.

Another discovery was made to the effect that rope throwing, considered to be essentially a prerogative of the Western cow-puncher, was known and used by the Egyptians about 2800 B. C.

Game Birds Distributed.

English pheasants and wild mallard ducks recently have been sent to all parts of the United States by the American Game Protective and Propagation Association who agreed to protect them.

These shipments are the first to be made in accordance with a plan for restocking the country with game through the establishment of sanctuaries on which birds can increase unmolested. The overflow from these sanctuaries will provide shooting on contiguous lands.

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